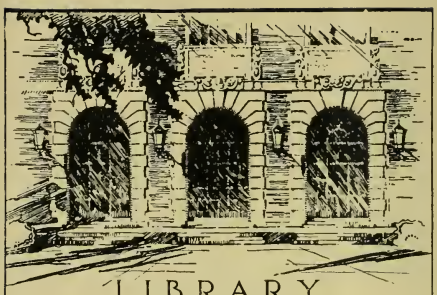

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Isabella Baker
1816 170

MYSTERY

AND

CONFIDENCE:

A TALE.

BY A LADY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MYSTERY

AND

CONFIDENCE.

CHAP. I.

———Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
——A great perturbation in nature,
To receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effect of watching.

MACBETH.

LAURA, St. Aubyn, O'Brien, and Mordaunt, were seated on one side the fire, with the sandwich tray before them; on the other side, thrown on a sofa, Ellen saw a tall thin young man, who, deeply

absorbed in thought, noticed not her entrance. One pale, sickly looking hand hung motionless by his side, the other shaded his eyes, and over his brow his black hair fell in disordered curls; his dress, though that of a gentleman, was evidently neglected, and his whole appearance was

"Drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn;
Or crazed by care, or cross'd by hopeless love!"

As Ellen entered, St. Aubyn rose, and with subdued emotion, said in a low tone:

"My love, we waited for you;" then somewhat louder;— "My Lord De Montfort, will you allow me to introduce you to...." he faltered, and looked as if he dreaded to pronounce the name.... "to my wife....to.... Lady St. Aubyn?"

As he spoke, Lord De Montfort started from his reverie, shook back the curls which shaded his face, and shewed a fine, but pale and emaciated countenance. For an instant his bright black eyes flashed,

and his cheeks crimsoned with a sudden emotion. He hastily took two or three steps forward, as if to greet some well-known friend; but seeing Ellen, who, half alarmed, leaned upon St. Aubyn, he gazed upon her for a moment with such an earnest yet melancholy expression as extremely affected her. She courtesied, and he bent his head with the air of a perfect gentleman, but spoke not, and then threw himself on his sofa again.

Ellen perceived that St. Aubyn's frame shook with subdued emotion, and her own trembled with an indefinable sensation.

"Come, Lady St. Aubyn," said Laura, "sit here by the fire; you look pale and cold; you should not indeed expose yourself to the night air in crossing the hall and staircase."

Ellen gladly sat down, and while they were taking their little meal, she glanced her eyes towards the youth, whose mysterious manner impressed her with feel-

ings of no very pleasing import: she saw that under the shade of his bent brows he was attentively gazing upon her. The portentous gloom of his countenance seemed to her troubled imagination to forebode some direful event, and she grew so pale, that Laura perceiving it, put a glass of wine into her hand, and begged her to drink it. Before she would comply, St. Aubyn said:—

"Ellen, neither my entreaties, nor those of his former friend, Miss Cecil, can prevail on Lord De Montfort to take the slightest refreshment; try, my love, if you can induce him to take a glass of wine with you."

Ellen with sudden effort conquering the agitation of her spirits, said: "Indeed, my Lord, I shall be very happy if Lord De Montfort will do me that honour. May I, my Lord," speaking to him, "make it my request that you will do so?"

The soft persuasive tones of her voice seemed to touch him; he rose, and with

a voice deep, melancholy, and impressive, said:

"At *your* request, Madam!"

He advanced, and took from Laura a glass of wine she offered to him; he bowed to Ellen, and lifted the glass to his lips, but instantly exclaimed, while his whole person shook with agitation:

"I *cannot* drink it! In *this* house! Oh, God!"

He let fall the glass, and covering his face with his hands, rushed out of the room.

O'Brien instantly followed him, while the little party which remained sat in silent dismay and astonishment. Yet St. Aubyn's emotion partook more of vexation than surprize: he paced the room with hasty strides for a few minutes, and then approaching Ellen, said, clasping her hand in his, which trembled with agitation—"This scene has been too much for you, my love: could I have imagined De Montfort's demeanor would

have been so wild, I would not have brought him hither; yet let us make allowances for him---he doated on his sister." St. Aubyn's voice seemed elevated with deep contending passions: for a moment he paused, then added, "You had better go to your rest, my love, and you, Laura: I do not suppose this young man will return to-night."

He rung, and inquired of the servant in waiting where the two gentlemen then were. "They have been in the study, my Lord," said the man; "but are now gone to their chambers, which Mrs. Bayfield sent to say were ready for them."

The ladies rose to retire, just as Mr. O'Brien returned: he brought apologies from his pupil to Lady St. Aubyn, saying that Lord de Montfort regretted extremely his distress should have shewed itself so visibly, and doubtless alarmed her. "Forgive him, Madam," said O'Brien: "this is the first time he has been in this house, or even in England, since the

death of Lady St. Aubyn: and recollections of the sister he lost so young, the sister he adored, have been too much for him."

"Surely," said Laura, "he must have been uncommonly attached to her, since six years have not effaced her from his memory." She sighed---the tear stood in her eye; for she thought---"It is scarcely as many months since I lost the sweetest sister in the world, yet she is comparatively forgotten."

"He cherishes every recollection of her," said O'Brien, "with officious care: he constantly wears her portrait next his heart. Before we left Spain, he insisted on visiting her grave, and was so deeply affected, I feared for his reason. To you, my Lord St. Aubyn, I ought to apologize for details which I see distress you, but I thought it was necessary to account for my pupil's strange deportment."

St. Aubyn bowed; but traces of vexation were legible in his expressive face.

Mr. Mordaunt made some inquiries after the present state of Lord de Montfort, to which Mr. O'Brien replied he had left him in bed, and tolerably composed; that he had consented to breakfast with the family the next morning, when he hoped personally to apologize to the Countess for the alarm he had given her.

The ladies now retired, and each went to her respective apartment. Lady St. Aubyn passed through her own room into that where the infant lay: both the child and his nurse slept quietly. She knelt a moment by the bed-side, and offered a fervent prayer to heaven for the health and happiness of her infant, and for its father, who seemed menaced by some mysterious disturbance. The contrast presented by the soft sleep, the placid innocence of the baby's face, to the scene of anxiety and confusion she had left, deeply affected her. Tears stole down her cheeks, and wetted the little hands

she held pressed to her lips. At length, rousing herself, she returned to her bed-chamber, where Jane waited to undress her: "Make haste, Jane," she said, "I am weary." Jane obeyed in silence; for her Lady's pensive looks had power to quiet even her loquacious propensities.

In a few minutes Ellen was laid on her pillow, and the tumultuous throbbing of her heart began to subside. In about half an hour she heard St. Aubyn go to the room he occupied at present, and fancied, after his valet left him, she could distinctly hear him pacing the apartment, and sighing heavily: but this perhaps was chiefly fancy; for the wind still howled and sobbed round the Castle, and through its large hall and long galleries. Sometimes it sounded like the low moans of one in grief or pain: then in shriller gusts it shook the lofty battlements, or swept over the tops of the high

trees, which bent and rustled beneath its power.

Ellen, restless, uneasy, impressed with the melancholy countenance and strange conduct of their mysterious guest, vainly endeavoured to sleep, and turned from side to side, soothed only in the intervals of the storm by hearing the soft breathings of her infant, whose couch (the door being open between the rooms) was so near her, that she could accurately distinguish every breath he drew. Two or three times she was inclined to rise, and steal him from his nurse's side to partake her bed; for she felt how glad she should be in that unquiet hour to feel his little cheek pressing against her's, and hold him to her anxious heart; but fearing to disturb, or give him cold, she relinquished her purpose, and endeavoured to compose herself to rest.

At length, just after the Castle clock had struck two, she felt as if sleep were

stealing over her fatigued senses; but starting from a momentary forgetfulness, she heard a light footstep, yet sounding as if the person walking wore no shoes, approaching her bed-room door. It was she knew unfastened; for lest the child should be ill, or want additional assistance, it was always left so. Starting, she listened: her breath grew short, and her heart beat audibly, as the steps approached nearer and nearer; yet not losing her presence of mind, she drew aside her curtain, and fixing her eyes on the door, prepared to fly into the inner room, should, as she now began to expect, a midnight robber meet her view.

Slowly, slowly, opened the door, and a tall thin figure, wrapped in a loose night-gown, just appeared within it. "Sister! sister!" said a voice, low, tremulous, and impressive: "sister, are you awake? You bade me call you early."

The figure! the voice!---Oh, what became of Ellen, when in both she recog-

nized the wild, the mysterious, De Montfort! In his pale hand he bore a lamp, the flashing light of which fell at intervals on his gloomy countenance: while his bright black eyes were indeed open, but, oh! "their sense was shut."

Again, as he advanced into the room, he repeated in the same low mournful tone, "Sister *Rosolia!* What, sleeping still? You said you would rise early, and walk with me." Then pausing, he seemed to stand as if listening for an answer; but suddenly, with a start of recollection and a heavy sigh, he exclaimed, "Oh yes, I remember! too well I remember! You cannot rise: you will never rise again!---*You are dead! you are dead! you are dead!*"

Again a solemn pause ensued, and sighs, which seemed to rend his bosom, alone broke the terrific silence of the moment.

Again he spoke with an energy of action, as if his sleeping agitations were

breaking into frenzy, addressing himself as in answer to one who had spoken to him.

"But did he murder you? Was it St. Aubyn? Tell me, I conjure you, and answer *truly*. Condemn not your own soul, and O, Rosolia, involve not mine in condemnation by a lie!—A lie!---*Can the dead lie?*---And you are come to me *here*---aye, *here*, in this very chamber, where in our innocent school-days you used to sleep---to tell me the truth---the *truth*, Rosolia."

And now with quicker steps he paced the chamber, as if pursuing one who fled before him, yet, with that wonderful instinctive power which often attends the sleep-walker, avoiding every obstacle.

"Nay, fly me not!" he exclaimed: "deceive me not; for I have seen an angel in *thy place* to-night; and if thou art not a false and lying spirit, thou wilt not lead me to injure her." Then pausing again,

as if listening to some one who spoke, he said, with quickness---

"I know it! I know it! That *pistol*---that *ring!* Yes, yes, yes, yes! Those indeed were direful evidences of his guilt!---Years, years, I have passed in thinking of them!---Yet he says, he swears, he is innocent---that it was *De Sylva*---that *thou* wert guilty! Oh, tell me, Rosolia, was it---was it so?---But I will pray for thy soul."

He knelt, and placing the lamp before him on the floor, its dismal light fell on his sad countenance, and shewed his eyes upturned, and his lips moving as in fervent prayer, while at intervals he crossed himself, and bowed his forehead to the earth. Then rising with a sudden start, he exclaimed---

"Hark, O'Brien calls! He will hear me---he shall not know my thoughts. It might not be St. Aubyn who shed thy blood: yet, oh, Rosolia---oh, my sister,

it *was* thy blood I saw! And here is some of it on my hand."

He shook his hand violently, and appearing to look at it earnestly, he uttered a low, mournful, and distracted cry of terror, and rushed out of the room.

Alarm and horror had kept Ellen silent---she fainted not; yet scarcely could she be said to live. But as soon as his receding footsteps convinced her he was really gone, she hastily threw on some of her clothes, and flew, scarcely in her senses, to St. Aubyn's room. His door was fast, but with repeated knockings she aroused him, and great indeed was his consternation to see her so pale, so almost convulsed with fear and agitation.

"My dearest life!" he exclaimed: "what, for heaven's sake, is the matter with the child?"

"Oh! I have left him! I have forsaken him!" said she in terror, "all the doors open too, and that poor distracted youth may perhaps return, and who

knows what injury he may do him! Oh! let us fly to the child," and she made some hasty steps towards the door.

"Recollect yourself, my Ellen," said the astonished St. Aubyn: "you are dreaming---sit down in this chair by the fire, and compose your spirits."

"Oh! no, it was no dream," said the shuddering Ellen, "I saw him as I see you now! he came to my room and said such dreadful things!"---

"Who came to your room?" exclaimed St. Aubyn: "who dared to intrude, to disturb and alarm you thus?"

"Oh! he was sleeping, I believe! but in his sleep---Oh heavens! he talked so dreadfully---of such horrid things---and called upon his sister in such tones! Oh! I never, never shall forget them!"

"Was it De Montfort?" asked the dismayed St. Aubyn.

"Oh yes, oh yes—De Montfort! Oh, his eyes, his face, his voice! I never,

never, shall forget them!" she repeated with renewed agitation.

"Unhappy young man!" said St. Aubyn, with a sigh. "Would to God thou had'st never come hither! Affright not yourself, my Ellen, with his wild wanderings. By this time, I had hoped the wretch, who caused this dreadful mischief, might have been found, and all might have been cleared. Years have I sought in vain. Still, still, he evades my search—perhaps exists no longer.

"It is, however, time to reveal the past to you; but now you are too much alarmed to hear the long and melancholy tale: return to your bed, my Ellen; try to rest for my sake, for your babe's, who must suffer, should his tender nurse be ill: go to repose, and I will watch by you till morning; then, dear, and for ever dear creature, all shall be revealed; but remember your promise, in spite of all appearances—still to believe me innocent!"

Prevailed on at length to return to her own chamber, yet Ellen entreated St. Aubyn to examine the gallery, and see if De Montfort might not be again returned to visit the room he seemed to know so well; and even when assured he was not there, she still shuddered and turned pale, as fancy pictured him standing with his lamp in the door-way, or pacing with disordered steps the chamber floor.

After obtaining a few hours rest, which somewhat restored her, Ellen, by appointment, joined St. Aubyn in his study at a very early hour, where he had promised to explain, as far as he could, the strange and vexatious events which had so long involved him in the greatest uneasiness.

Sad was St. Aubyn's countenance, and the cheek of Ellen was yet pale from her recent agitation when they met. St. Aubyn, tenderly taking her hand, said, " I half regret, my Ellen, that my selfish

love withdrew you from that sweet content and cheerfulness which surrounded your peaceful abode when first we met, to partake with me cares and alarms which otherwise you never would have known."

"My dear St. Aubyn, do not talk so," said Ellen, with a tender tear: "all the cares, all the alarms you speak of, were they ten times doubled, could not outweigh, in my estimation, the happiness of being one hour your wife. Oh believe, my beloved Lord, *that* fate I would have chosen, even though I had been sure the next would have brought my death."

"Matchless creature!" said St. Aubyn, clasping her to his bosom: "in such love, such tenderness, I am overpaid for all the griefs which former events have brought upon me, for all the anxiety with which the present hour surrounds me!---Repeat to me, dearest, as well as

you can remember, what you heard from the unfortunate Edmund in his nocturnal visit to your apartment."

Ellen, while her cheek was blanched by the fearful recollection, and her whole frame trembled as she called to mind that terrific visit, endeavoured to obey, yet she feared to shock him, by repeating those words which seemed to connect his name with the idea of guilt and murder; but contrary to her expectation, he heard her without surprize, and with calm, though sorrowful composure: he sighed heavily indeed, but no alarm or perturbation appeared in either his countenance or gesture. As she ended, he said, "All this I knew; but too well knew what horrible suspicions this unhappy youth has formed, nay own he had great reason to conceive them. Poor Edmund! these dismal thoughts, working in his mind, and, as it appears, concealed from all others, have preyed upon it till reason

seems shaken, and his troubled spirit wakes even while his bodily organs are locked in sleep! No wonder in this dreadful tumult of his imagination he came to your room, for that room used to he his sister's when she visited my mother before our unfortunate marriage was even thought of; and often, doubtless, in the days of his childhood, he has gone to her door to waken her at her request, and chid her for sleeping so late when he wanted her to walk with him: for dearly did he love her; and in those days she was innocent, and she was happy! Alas! poor Rosolia, whatever were thy faults, thy fate was dreadful!"

He sighed, and was a moment silent.

CHAP. II.

Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And plants a blister there—makes marriage vows
As false as divers oaths. HAMLET.

O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife,
The secrets of my heart thy bosom shall partake.
JULIUS CÆSAR.

"I NEED not," said St. Aubyn, "say much on the subject of my first acquaintance with Lady Rosolia de Montfort. You have heard, I believe, that *her* father was a near relation of *mine*, and that her mother was a Spanish Lady of a high noble family, and were Roman Catholics. The lady's friends were exceedingly averse to the match, and at length consented only on condition that

the sons of the marriage should be bred Roman Catholics; and after the father's death, should he die during their minority, be placed under the care of the mother's relations. Rosolia would probably also have been a Catholic, but her mother died young, and she was placed in the care of my mother and Lady Juliana Mordaunt. In the vacations she was generally here, where my mother constantly, and my aunt frequently, resided; and here also Edmund almost always spent the time of his school recesses, though twice they went to Spain with their father, and spent a few months amongst their mother's connections.

"Rosolia grew up very handsome, but the character of her beauty was not such as suited my taste: there was too much hauteur in her countenance; too much pride in the mind which informed it to please me; yet from our early youth the friends on both sides were anxious to unite us. I had at that time no particular

predilection for any of her sex, nor could I object any thing against her, though certainly not exactly the sort of woman I should have chosen; her partiality in my favour, however, appeared evident, and was too flattering to be resisted by a young man like me, from a young woman who had crowds of admirers, most of them my superiors in fortune and quality.

"We were married, therefore, when I was about five-and-twenty, and Rosolia six years my junior. For two years that my mother lived, we remained a great deal with her, and in the country, under her eye and that of Lady Juliana. Rosolia did not discover those unpleasant traits, which, though they lay dormant, were not conquered.

"On my mother's death, we removed for a time to London, and there Rosolia lay in of a son, the only child we ever had. But, ah! how different a mother was Rosolia from you, my Ellen! No

care for her infant subdued the excessive vivacity she now began to display, no maternal tenderness subjugated, or even softened, the levity of conduct which now became manifest, and ultimately was her bane. The society of every idle coxcomb was preferred to mine: my remonstrances, and those of my respectable aunt, nay, even of her own father, were unheeded. My disposition, naturally inclined to jealousy, took fire at the lightness of her carriage; but she held me in contempt, often in derision; and as the tongue of slander had not yet fixed on the name of any particular person to connect with her's, I was obliged to submit to see her *flirting*, as it is called, first with one admirer, then another, *and the last fool as welcome as the former.* My aunt, wearied and vexed at our domestic unhappiness, in a great measure forsook us, and contracted a dislike of Lady St. Aubyn, which, in some degree, extended to all her family. Edmund was

still our frequent guest, but his partiality for his sister would not allow him to see a fault in her, and indeed his extreme youth made me conceal from him, as much as possible, the uneasy terms on which we lived together. We had been married about three years, and our little boy was six months old when Rosolia's father died: by his will, he appointed me the guardian of Edmund's estates, till he should attain the age of twenty-four, and requested that I would see him placed under the care of the Duke de Castel Nuovo, in agreement with the terms of his own marriage-contract with the daughter of that nobleman.

"This request I could not refuse, yet knew not how to leave my wife in England; for if her conduct were so reproachable while we were together, what had I to expect if I left her solely to her own guidance? Yet such was the perversity of her temper, I doubted whether she

would accompany me abroad: to that, however, she consented, prompted, I believe, more by a wish to be as much as possible with her brother, than to oblige me. But nothing could induce her to leave the child behind, though my aunt offered to take it solely under her own care during our absence, although Rosolia herself never saw it, except for about five minutes, once or twice in the day.

"This singular obstinacy inspired my aunt with an idea (which I confess I partly shared) that Rosolia's intention was to leave the babe with her paternal relations; for though she called herself a protestant, she certainly had much inclination towards the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, and, I grieve to say, held all religious principles so lightly, that to distress me and vex my aunt, she was but too capable of placing her child in the hands of Catholics, that it might be bred up in a religion she knew my aunt abhorred, and

I had no good opinion of. To counteract this, or any other scheme which might be formed to take the child from me, as well as to ensure its being well taken care of, Lady Juliana insisted that our good Bayfield should accompany us, and made her promise never to let the child be absent from her sight. But these precautions, in the event, proved useless; for the poor babe caught the small-pox soon after we landed at Cadiz, where we remained a short time, and died in my arms, attended with undeviating care by the worthy Bayfield: for, oh, my Ellen, your tender nature will recoil when I tell you its unfeeling mother refused to see it from the time the disorder came to its height, though she herself had had it, because its appearance was too shocking to her delicacy! Every care, however, that could be obtained, was lavished on it, but in vain.

"Poor Edmund grieved sincerely at this event, and shared my lonely and sorrow-

ful hours; for he had been attached to the infant with excessive affection, and always felt for me the sincerest regard, while I considered him as my own brother, and thought no attention too much to serve or please him.

"Soon after the death of the child we proceeded to Seville, and, in the gaiety of that city, the attentions she received from her mother's relations, and the flattering compliments paid to her beauty by the crowds of gentlemen who now surrounded her, Rosolia soon lost whatever traces of sorrow remained for the loss of her infant. She was handsomer than ever, and shone in all the elegance of dress and the blaze of unnumbered jewels, with which my lavish fondness, in the early part of our marriage, and the liberality of her Spanish relations, had profusely supplied her. Her grandfather, the Duke de Castel Nuovo, at whose palace in Seville Edmund was to be placed, happened to be absent, having been sudden-

ly called to Madrid on some important state business, and wrote to beg I would remain a month or two at his palace, when he hoped he should return thither to receive his grandson from my hands, to see his grandaughter, and thank me for the kindness with which I had taken so long a journey. Having nothing immediately to recall me to England, I was not sorry to see more of this interesting country; and hearing of a beautiful villa to be let on the bank of Guadalaxara, I removed thither with my family, preferring it to a residence in the Duke's palace.

"Nothing could exceed the beauty of our little domain, or the rich luxuriance of the country in which it stood. This villa was only two miles from Seville, where at that time several regiments were stationed, and all the officers of rank eagerly sought an introduction to me and the beautiful Rosolia. Amongst them was a man of the name of De Sylva."

At this name Ellen started, for she had heard it from Edmund, in his wild wanderings the night before; though, till that instant, she could not recollect it.

"Why do you start, my love?" said St. Aubyn; "does some intuitive emotion whisper to you that this was the wretch whose villainy involved me in so much misery?"

"It was the name," said Ellen, "which I could not recollect just now; the name I heard from Edmund."

"No doubt," replied St. Aubyn, "it dwelt upon his mind; for but last night I again endeavoured to convince him of that villain's guilt. But to proceed.

"This DeSylva was a young man of a very fine person and elegant manners; one, in short, exactly fitted to win the favour of any woman, who looked more to exterior appearance than intrinsic merit. He was, I afterwards learned, a determined gamester, of broken, if not ruined fortunes, without principles, and stained with many

vices; yet this man I too soon perceived the light Rosolia had selected as her chief favourite. If she danced, he was her partner; and often was her lovely person exhibited in the fascinating but immoral dances of her country: an exhibition, oh, how unfit for an English matron!—how hateful to the delicacy of my sentiments. I am perhaps too fastidious; but I again repeat, such a display, even of grace and beauty, in a married woman, is displeasing, but carried to the excess Rosolia did, detestable. How can we wonder at the alarming strides vice has made in this country, when we see even wives and mothers, in the slightest drapery, and with an almost unlimited freedom of manners, courting the notice of men whom they know to be characters which neither honour, nor even the ties of friendship, can restrain from the gratification of their passions.

"Forgive, my Ellen, this digression, by you so little needed; but I linger and

dwell on any subject which can a moment detain me from those dreadful scenes I must soon describe. I was speaking of the intimacy which now took place between this De Sylva and Lady St. Aubyn. In dancing, walking, or riding, he was her constant attendant; and in the last exercise she excited the admiration of all who beheld her. Her English side-saddle and riding-dress, and the ease with which she managed her spirited Arabian, drew the most flattering plaudits from the gay military admirers who constantly surrounded her; and most of all from De Sylva, whose manners at last became so particular and presuming, I could not avoid noticing it, and telling Rosolia if he altered not his conduct, I should be under the necessity of forbidding him my house.

"At first she only laughed at my threats, and turned every thing I said into ridicule, but still persisted in the same manner of living, till I perceived, that

even in that gay country her conduct was disapproved by all who witnessed it, and who had not lost all sense of decorum; even two or three of the older officers, men of rank and consequence, began to look gravely upon her, and with a sort of displeasure at me, as if they thought me too supine in not more warmly asserting my own honour. I now determined, therefore, to remove her from the place where she had so many opportunities of meeting this young man, which, without an *eclat* I wished to avoid, I could not prevent, as I believed her innocent though imprudent, and to visit some of the most interesting scenes in that part of the country where we now were, hoping that a tour, which I knew she had never made, would give a new turn to the sentiments of Rosolia: we removed, therefore, with our suite, from the beautiful villa we had lately occupied, and travelled the first day to Cormona, where we visited its castle, of immense extent, but now

wholly in ruins; from thence we went by excellent, but very ancient roads, to Cordova, where we also saw every thing worth notice, and spent a few days very agreeably; at least they would have been agreeable, had Rosolia seemed in the least inclined to enjoy the new scenes presented to her, or the civilities of the inhabitants of this ancient town, where our rank and relationship to the Duke de Castel Nuovo ensured us a hospitable reception from all the noble families whose manner of life is cheerful and pleasant.

"After leaving Cordova, we travelled through the delightful vale of the Guadalaxara, which runs between the ridges of hills embellished with hanging woods and olive-yards. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the scene through which we now for two days travelled. No mind, which had not entirely lost all power of enjoying the charms of nature, could have been dead to the enchanting scenes which

the banks of the lovely Guadalaxara now presented in ever-varying succession. Extensive plains, beautifully tinted by rows of olive-trees, towers and ancient castles rising at intervals on the side of the stream, afforded a variety of charming and picturesque views, from which Edmund and myself derived the warmest pleasure. Alas! the heart of Rosolia was shut to them all. At length we reached a small but pretty villa at the foot of the Sierra Morena, which I had learned some time before was unoccupied, and had hired, and caused to be prepared for our reception. Edmund's health had appeared to be somewhat shaken by the very warm climate of our abode near Seville, and it was thought the cool air from those mountains would brace and invigorate his drooping frame. Here, then, we rested in this quiet retreat, whence I made occasional excursions, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, in the picturesque environs of our

new abode. Sometimes I extended them to the northern side of the Sierra, and visited the romantic country of La Mancha, which Cervantes has immortalized.

"It is impossible to describe the various beauties these mountains present; the clear torrent of the Rio de las Pedras, falling over beds of rocks, through glens of beautiful woods; the wild and unfrequented solitudes, covered with a rich variety of flowering and sweet-scented shrubs, and the interesting new colony of La Corolina, of which I hope, some day, to give you a fuller account; all rendered these excursions delightful to me; the more so, as they occupied my thoughts, and carried me from a woman whose capricious humours and inconsistent conduct rendered my home irksome and distasteful.

"Rosolia, angry at being withdrawn from the society she so much prized, and still more so at being deprived of De Sylva's company, now assumed manners the most

aggravating, and caprices the most extraordinary. Sometimes, for a day or two together, the sound of her voice never reached the ear of any human being; but sunk in affected apathy, she pretended scarcely to see or hear any thing that was passing. Then she would suddenly assume the gayest air, and for hours would scarcely cease speaking; following me incessantly; never allowing me to read or reflect a moment; singing, playing on her harp, or with castenets in her hands, dancing with a gaiety that was as unpleasing as it appeared unnatural, till her forced spirits, being quite exhausted, she would fall into violent hysterics, and be conveyed to bed, whence she would not rise again in many days.

"Think only, my dear Ellen, what a life this was for me. With no other companion (for Edmund was still a mere boy), and dreading every hour to what the caprices of the next might lead. At length, all at once, she affected a new hu-

mour, and was continually rambling alone, even so late in the evening, that in the neighbourhood of those wild mountains, I feared some evil would befall her; but vain were my representations, vain my entreaties. She told me, she thought it hard to be denied the only pleasure my jealous temper had left her, and that I had better revive the old Spanish customs of lattices and duennas, and lock her up altogether. These, and many such provoking speeches, silenced me; but I saw that our good Bayfield was suffering from some unknown cause. She was frequently in tears, and betrayed, at times, a degree of agitation which astonished me; for in general her composure was remarkable. I conjectured, that, dissatisfied with her lady, as indeed she had but too much reason to be, the worthy woman pined to revisit England; but on my pressing her on this subject, she assured me, that wherever I was, there she was best pleased to be; and only wished

she *knew how best to shew her devotion to my interests.*

"These last words seemed spoken with particular meaning, but she evaded any explanation. A new vexation now assailed both her and me: several of Lady St. Aubyn's valuable jewels were from time to time missing, and vainly sought.

"Rosolia affected the most perfect indifference about them, saying, since she had no one to wear them, she cared nothing for jewels: but Bayfield, who was the only person, who, except her lady, had access to the place where the jewels were kept, was excessively disturbed at their frequent losses. At last, a very fine and remarkable ring of mine, composed of an antique cameo, set with brilliants of great value, was also gone. I began to suspect my valet of these repeated thefts, though I had obtained of him the most excellent character; and he had been three or four years in my service

without the slightest suspicion of dishonesty in any respect.

" Determined, however, to watch this man, I said nothing of the loss of my ring, thinking if I appeared to have no suspicion I should the easier detect him.

" About a week after this circumstance, being restless, and unable to sleep, I rose from my bed at midnight, and sat for some time at my window, watching the bright moon, which in that clear climate gave a light scarcely inferior to that of day : but judge of my surprize, when I saw the figure of a man emerge slowly from a grove of cork trees, at some little distance ; and after looking cautiously around, pass close under my windows, and approach those of Lady St. Aubyn's apartment. We had for some time inhabited separate rooms, as she complained of restless nights, and chose to have her chamber to herself. I fancied that I had now detected the robber,

who, by some means, having gained access to those chambers, had, from time to time, stolen the jewels I mentioned; but in a moment I saw Rosolia's window open, and herself appear at it. She spoke a few words to this man, on whom the moonlight falling more clearly, I distinctly perceived the height, figure, and I fancied the features of De Sylva.

"Rosolia instantly threw down a light rope ladder, and the man, whoever he was, began to mount it; but on a sudden she turned from the window, as if disturbed by the entrance of some one to her room; and making a sign to him with a hurried air, he hastily descended: she immediately closed the window, and the man ran to the grove from which he had first appeared.

"All this scene passed so quickly, I had scarcely time to recollect myself, or determine what I ought to do---but hastily seizing my pistols, which lay always

loaded in my room, I descended a private staircase leading to the garden, and with quick steps, followed the man, who lay concealed in the grove. I walked with as little noise as I could, fearing, lest, if he heard me, he might make his escape, and I should be deprived of the satisfaction I expected, so that I was close to him before he perceived me, and seizing him with a powerful grasp, I dragged him into the moonlight, and there saw it was indeed De Sylva."

CHAP. III.

Ou suis-je? O Ciel ou suis je? ou porte je mes
vœux?
Zayre, Nerestan—couple ingrat, couple affreux,
Traitres arracher moi ce jour que je respire,
Ce jour souillè par vous.
————Ah que vois-je? Ah ma sœur
Zayre!.... Elle n'est plus.—Ah monstre ah jour
horrible!

ZAYRE PAR VOLTAIRE.

"RAGE almost choaked me as I exclaimed:---Villain! you here, and lurking under my windows at this hour!' He shook with cowardly apprehension, and attempted some excuse, which, however, his terror rendered inarticulate: still the momentary pause gave me time for recollection, and disdaining to assault an unarmed man, I threw him one of my pistols, and bade him defend himself: again in faltering tones he murmured

some assurances that he merely came to see Lady St. Aubyn's favourite servant, a Spanish girl named Theresa; but this hacknied excuse was too shallow to obtain a moment's credit, and I still pressed him to an instant decision of this affair. He now, somewhat more firmly, requested me to recollect, that if we fought, and he fell, what would be the appearance of a man found in my grounds murdered, as it would seem; and on the other hand he appealed to my generosity, what would be his situation should I be killed, and above all, what a slur would be cast on the reputation of Lady St. Aubyn by such a business. Calmed by these representations, which certainly had some justice in them, I finally consented to wait till the next evening: the time between, he told me, he should pass at a little Posada in the neighbourhood, where, he said, he had a friend waiting for him, who would come with him to a spot I mentioned near the mountains;

and during the same space I said I would ride to Almana (the next small town), where a gentleman resided with whom I had some acquaintance, and on whom I would prevail to be my second in this affair: then bidding him retain the pistol, and bring it prepared, as I should do its fellow, to the place of meeting, I sternly told him, that should I see him again lurking beneath my walls, I would not wait the event of the next evening, but treat him as a midnight robber deserved to be treated. I then left him and returned to the house: a faint light yet gleamed from the windows of Rosolia's room, but the rope ladder was withdrawn, and the curtains closed, so that I concluded she had given up all expectation of seeing De Sylva again that night. I watched, however, till morning, but all was still, and I then threw myself on my bed to obtain one hour's repose; after which I rose, and spent some time in settling my affairs, and writing some let-

ters, to be delivered in case I should fall in the duel with De Sylva.

" After this I went to Lady St. Aubyn's room: at the door I met Bayfield, who, pale, and with her eyes swoln with weeping, looked as if she had, like myself, watched all night.

" My good Bayfield,' said I, ' where is your Lady, and why do you look thus alarmed and haggard?'

" She answered me, but with some confusion, that her Lady was just dressed, and that she had been induced to watch in the chamber next Lady St. Aubyn's almost all night, having heard some noises which had induced her to *rise at midnight*, and go to her Lady's apartment, whom she found also much agitated, and therefore had remained there till morning. I made no doubt, and I afterwards found this conjecture was just, that my faithful old servant's suspicions having been excited, she had gone to her room, and by interrupting her, had caused the sud-

den dismissal of De Sylva, and had since passed the night in bewailing Rosolia's evil propensities. Without staying for any explanation, however, I left her, and passed into the Countess's apartment: she started at the sight of me, for of late we had seldom met but at meals, and her guilty conscience taught her to consider my visit as extraordinary. I told her sternly to be seated and hear me, and I then related to her the events of the preceding night: at first she trembled and turned pale, but soon recovering her effrontery, she attempted, as usual, to make a jest of what she affected to term my ridiculous jealousy.

"Mark me, Rosolia!' cried I rising, and eagerly grasping her arm, for, with affected scorn, she attempted to rush past me. 'Mark me! I am no longer thus to be deceived. *This evening, this evening shall revenge my too long endured injuries*---the *wretch* who has so deeply wronged me, *this arm shall punish.*'

"At that moment, while my angry looks were fixed upon her countenance, where rage and disdain contended with shame and fear, Edmund entered the room, and must, I knew, have heard the threats I uttered: he started and looked amazed, for frequent as were our altercations, they had never before risen to a height so alarming.

"I left them together, and taking my horse, rode to Almana, where, most unfortunately, I did not find my friend at home; and after waiting his return till I feared I should not arrive at my villa time enough to keep my appointment, I left the place alone, and merely going into the house to take my pistol, I hastened to the appointed spot. There I waited, vainly waited, for nearly two hours: no De Sylva arrived; and concluding that he then meant not to keep his appointment, and some vague fears pressing on my mind that possibly Rosolia might be the partner of his flight, I hurried back to

the villa. It was almost dark when I arrived, and just as I entered the hall, heated, disordered, not having changed my dress since the night before, and in the confusion of my thoughts not even concealing the pistol I had carried in my hand, I met Edmund, who eagerly asked me where his sister was.

"'I know not,' said I; but a thousand suspicions darted into my bosom, and gave to my countenance and manner an agitation which must have appeared to him extraordinary. 'Is she not in her own apartment? I have been out all day, and have not seen her since I left her with you this morning.'

"'Nor I,' said Edmund, 'since half an hour before I saw you return on horseback; she then complained of a violent head-ache, and said she would try if the evening air would remove it: I offered to walk with her, but she said she would rather be alone, for she had enough to occupy her thoughts: she kissed me

too,' added Edmund, 'and bade me farewell, sighing bitterly, and saying her heart was heavy and full of terror: why then,' said I, 'will you go alone, sister? why not let me walk with you? I really think there *is* danger in being out late so near the mountains.' She forced a smile, and replied, she feared nothing from the mountains: all her misery and terrors arose at home.'

"'Ungrateful Rosolia,' I replied, as Edmund told me this; to which he answered:---

"'Ah, my Lord, it grieves me to see you both so unhappy; I hope my grandfather's return will soon restore in some degree your domestic comfort; he will persuade Rosolia to be more accommodating to your wishes.'

"I sighed, and asked him which way his sister had gone.

"'Through the cork grove,' he replied, 'and towards the Hermitage, which is I know her favourite retreat.'

"Surely,' said I, 'she would not remain in that lonely place till this late hour; yet, so strange for sometime has been her conduct, I know not what to suppose: call the servants, my dear Edmund, to bring lights, for in that gloomy retreat it will be quite dark, and let us go in search of her.'

"We set out accordingly, attended by two men servants and my good Bayfield, who, fearing, as she said, her Lady might be ill, insisted on accompanying us. The place to which we directed our steps was a quarter of a mile from the villa, and, as I had said, by the time we had reached it the darkness of night had come on.

"This gloomy cell stood at the foot of a rock deep embowered in thick groves: a mountain stream fell from a considerable height near it, and the dash of its waters alone broke the silence of this secluded retreat, which was called the Hermitage, from the peculiar style in which it

was fitted up. For some time before we reached it we made the surrounding thickets resound with Rosolia's name: but all was silent, save the murmuring breeze and the dashing of the waterfall. I concluded that my wife was gone off with the infamous De Sylva, and my whole frame shook with rage and agitation.

"Why do you tremble so, my Lord?' said the affrighted Edmund, who hung upon my arm: 'do you think any harm has happened to my sister?'

"I know not,' I replied, 'but I fear it, greatly fear it!'

"Just then we entered the gloomy Hermitage: all was dark and still; the echo of our steps alone broke the awful silence. The men who accompanied us lifted their torches to throw a fuller light into the cell; and—ah! my Ellen, I dread to shock your tender nature by describing the horrid scene which met our view. —Imagine our sensations when we saw

the unfortunate Rosolia extended on the earth! her white garments dyed in *blood!* in that blood which some hand, either accidentally or by design, had shed! for on raising the body, by this time stiff and cold, a wound was discovered in the back of her head, which was evidently the effect of a pistol-ball, and had caused her death. You tremble and turn pale, my love: it grieves me to distress you, but think what was *my* distress, when Edmund, who, in frantic despair, had thrown himself by his murdered sister, found the fatal weapon which had done this deed of horror, and I saw at once it was the fellow pistol to that I had in my hand when he met me in the hall, remarkable for its peculiar construction and workmanship; the very one, in short, which I had given to De Sylva. Never, never shall I forget the glance of his dark eyes at that moment: I saw the direful suspicions he, at that instant, conceived, and which were still

more fatally confirmed by what immediately followed.

" My poor Bayfield, full of grief and horror, was arranging, with all the care circumstances would admit, the removal of the body to the house, when seeing something glitter amidst the horrible darkness which surrounded us, and our fading torches scarcely broke, she stooped and picked up *my ring*, that well-known ring, which I indeed had lost, but had not said so; and which she, from some impulsive feeling, perhaps fearing the sight of it in that place might implicate me in the late sad event, attempted to conceal in her bosom.

" What is that?' exclaimed the half-frantic Edmund, darting towards her and seizing her hand. ' *Your ring*, my Lord. *your ring!* at this time—in this place. The pistol too—those dreadful threatenings of revenge.—Ah God! Ah God!—what horrible conviction flashes on me.—

Rosolia! poor dear sister!---Ah, basely, basely murdered!' and he fell senseless on the ground.

"The domestics who attended us were Spaniards, and did not understand a word he said: but Bayfield stood the image of dismay.

"Ah, my Lord,' said she, 'fly, if indeed your hand by accident has done this deed, for think what will become of you amidst the bigotted Catholics, who will seek to revenge it.'

"Fly!' I repeated, 'my good old friend! Can you believe me guilty?'

"Oh no, my dear Lord,' she replied, 'never, never! but think what these unfortunate appearances will say against you to those who know you less than I do.'

"Whatever they say, I will brave,' I exclaimed: 'nor care I much after this dreadful moment what becomes of me; but never will I, by an ignominious

flight, tacitly avow myself guilty, when I know and surely cannot fail to prove my innocence.'

"In a few minutes one of the men, who, on Edmund's falling into the death-like trance from which we yet vainly sought to recover him, had fled towards the house for more assistance, returned with almost all the domestics, who eagerly crowded to satisfy their curiosity, and whose astonishment and impatient questions may be easily conceived. Between them they conveyed into the house their murdered mistress, and the still insensible Edmund, whose spirit we at one time imagined had really followed her's. To paint the confusion which ensued would be impossible: one express was instantly sent off to the Duke de Castel Nuovo, and several men I sent into the mountains and round the neighbourhood to seek for De Sylva, by whose hand I doubted not the fatal wound, either by accident or design, had been given. I

described his person and appearance, saying that such a man had been seen lurking about the house the night before.

"Some of the servants having remarked the capricious character, and, of late, the melancholy manners of Rosolia, suggested an idea that she had destroyed herself; but the situation of the wound prevented such a possibility. Forgive me, my love, these shocking details: they are indeed unsuited to the tenderness of your nature; but without a very accurate account of this unfortunate event, it would be impossible for you to judge what evidences there were of my apparent guilt, or real innocence.

"Edmund slowly recovered from his deep swoon, but his reason for a time was flown, and all the skill of the medical people about us failed for weeks to recover it. Yet still he knew me---still with an expression of the most vindictive hatred his eyes pursued me. His words frequently pointed out the nature

of his suspicions; but he raved so constantly, that they remained unnoticed, save by me and Bayfield: too fatally, alas! we understood them. To her I fully explained all that had passed, and she told me she had no hesitation in believing that De Sylva was the author of this direful tragedy. To find that villain appeared impossible: my servants returned, after a week's search in every direction, without having discovered the slightest trace of him. Indeed, to track a fugitive in that wild romantic country is extremely difficult: immense woods, deep caves, and the recesses of vast ruins, might easily shelter such a one from pursuit.

"To the servants I held out an idea that some banditti from the mountains had found their Lady in her lonely walk, as indeed they all knew I often had feared would be the case, and had murdered her for the sake of the money and jewels she had about her; and in truth many of

them had seen her go out with some rich ornaments, which she generally wore, and which certainly were removed from the body.

" On searching the Hermitage the next morning, a parcel was found, containing a complete Spanish habit for a boy, and a letter---at least a part of one, for part was torn away, and the remainder contained only these words:

At the Hermitage this evening
we must fly directly
St. Aubyn will wait for
come alone

" I easily imagined this was part of a letter from De Sylva, appointing Rosolia to meet him at the Hermitage. ' St. Aubyn will wait for' evidently alluded to my waiting for him at the place he had appointed to meet me; yet even these words seemed fatally to implicate me in this horrid transaction: whereas, if the whole had been preserved, it would

have entirely exculpated me from blame: so unfortunately did circumstances combine to throw the appearance of guilt upon me.

"When my messenger returned from Madrid, I learned that the venerable Duke de Castel Nuovo was too ill to travel: he left the whole management of this melancholy affair in my hands, expressing himself convinced that some of the banditti, who it was well known infested the Sierra Morena, had been the murderers of his grandaughter. He entreated me to take the greatest care of Edmund, and invited me, when he should be sufficiently recovered, to accompany him to Madrid, or if I could not make that convenient, to send him by some person in whom I could confide, and who would see him placed safely under his own care; and concluded by very kind expressions of regret that it had been so totally out of his power to pay me those personal attentions du-

ring my stay in Spain, which he had so anxiously wished to do.

" Thus then I found myself completely exonerated from all suspicion of having had any share of the late dreadful event, except in the mind of Edmund, who had by this time recovered his reason, and was by slow degrees regaining his health, yet still looked on me with horror and aversion, and was buried in the most profound and gloomy melancholy.

" Unable long to bear this state of estrangement and anxiety, I one day went to his room, and sitting down by the couch on which he lay, ' I see, Edmund,' said I, ' too plainly I see, the horrible suspicions you have formed, and the gloomy hatred so unnatural to your character, which preys upon your vitals. Neither can you long support a state so wretched. St Aubyn was not born to be the object of suspicions so cruel, nor Edmund to endure them. Hear me then patiently; and though, in tenderness to

the memory of the unfortunate Rosolia, I would, if possible, have concealed her misconduct from the whole world, and most of all from you, yet circumstances call on me so imperatively to disclose it, that I can no longer be silent.'

"I then, my Ellen, related to him every circumstance, as I have done to you; and though he evidently wavered, yet so strong was the prejudice he had conceived, that he was not wholly convinced.

"For the pistol,' said he, 'you have in some measure accounted: it might, if this story be true, have been placed there by De Sylva: his accursed hand it might have been which shed that blood ---that precious blood, which yet in imagination I see flowing at my feet! But ah! St. Aubyn, whence came that *ring*---that well known ring, which I so often have heard you declare you valued more than all the jewels in your possession?'

"Fully to account for that,' said I, 'is not in my power; but on my honour, I assure you, I had missed it several days, though, in hopes of discovering the thief, I did not mention it. You know several of Rosolia's jewels have lately been lost; and many times, since we have been here, she has asked me for sums of money, though here she could have had no use for them; but willing to gratify her in even her fancies, while they did not militate against my peace and honour, I never denied her, or desired any explanation; yet, in searching her escrutoire and drawers, no money has been found. This leads me to believe, nay, to be sure, that either the wretch, De Sylva, stole this ring and the other valuable articles missing, or she gave them to him in the meetings which Bayfield now owns she is convinced they *have of late* frequently had.'

"Impossible, impossible!' cried the noble but prejudiced youth: 'Rosolia

could not have condescended to favour, even with her friendship, so mean a wretch as one who would have received money or jewels at her hands. This story, my Lord, hangs ill together, and for it I have only your word---the word of one to whom it is of the utmost importance that I should believe it. But think, O think, what a chain of circumstances appear in proof against you!--- The threats *I* heard you utter, that your own hand should that very evening revenge your injuries! My meeting you, heated and confused, after two hours absence, no one knew whither, with one pistol in your hand---the fellow pistol found discharged by the dear murdered Rosolia—and, more than all, your ring, which Bayfield, impressed no doubt by similar suspicions, strove to conceal! Place all these in array against you, and tell me, tell me yourself, what I must, what I ought to believe.'

"It is enough,' I replied: 'I yield

myself then to your will. Take me, if such is your desire, to a prison, to death: your evidence I well perceive will be sufficient to convict me---to rob me of my honour and my life. But do you reckon for nothing your former knowledge of my character and disposition? Am I a man likely to have committed such a deed?---to have invented such a tale to excuse it, if I had? I swear to you, Edmund, by all that is most sacred, *I am innocent*---I will swear it to the latest moment of my existence.'

" Moved by these words, by the remembrance of all my former friendship for him---permit me to say, by the remembrance of years which I had so spent as to impress him with a firm opinion of my virtue and veracity, the generous youth paused awhile, and at length said—

" Well then, my Lord, since in this contrariety of assertion and evidence it is impossible that I should know what to

believe, I will for the present, at least, act as if I thought you innocent. Seek this De Sylva--seek him if you will throughout the world. I will breathe no word, hint no suspicion, that may impede you in the search. Should you be able to bring his confession in evidence of your integrity, I will then entreat your pardon for my disbelief. If, on the contrary, any new appearances of guilt arise against you---should any new discoveries inimical to your innocence be made, I shall still know how to reach you.

"Here let us part! As soon as my weak state will permit, I leave this fatal, this detested roof, and will join my grandfather at Madrid: from his letters I learn what you have led him to believe on this shocking subject. If, indeed, your tale be true, I ought most thankfully to acknowledge the lenient tenderness with which you have treated my poor sister's reputation.--But oh! could she, could she be so guilty?—— At

all events, it is well the Duke should credit your statement. At his age, the doubts which shake me thus would kill him!—Let us meet no more at present---Should De Sylva be found, write to me: write in English, and the people about me will not understand your letter. All farther search into this matter I must postpone till the commencement of my majority shall leave me my own master; then I must once more visit England, such is my father's will, to take possession of my estates in that country, and to receive the accounts from you. Then, my Lord, we will finally consider all the proofs which shall then have been obtained of your innocence or guilt; and I shall then either bewail the faults of Rosolia, or revenge her death, either by my sword or the hand of the law, as I may think most proper. I shall then be a man, and more able, both by improved judgment and bodily strength, to assert my own convictions. Most earnestly do

I wish, long ere that period arrives, your character may be cleared: yet, ah! how can I wish it, if by that acquittal my poor Rosolia must be proved so guilty!'

"In a few days after this conversation, Edmund, under the care of a person in whom I could confide, set out for Madrid; and I soon after discharging all my servants, except Mrs. Bayfield and my valet, whom I sent to England, left also this fatal spot. I hired a mule, and alone passed through the Sierra into La Mancha; and at Civedad I engaged a servant, not choosing to take one with me who had known any thing of the late painful transactions. On mules we proceeded, making every inquiry for De Sylva. Not even my servant knew my real name and rank; as I thought by concealing these I might have a better chance of finding the villain I sought: but still my search was vain. From Toledo, where I rested a short time, I wrote to some of the officers of De Sylva's regiment at Seville, to know if he

had returned thither, though it appeared most improbable he should have done so: but I was desirous of trying every chance by which he might be discovered. In answer, I learnt De Sylva had obtained leave of absence about two months before; but though it had been some time expired, he was not yet returned: so that the charge of desertion was now added to those others, which I doubted not induced him to keep himself concealed. I travelled through Spain, avoiding Madrid, where I knew my friend and correspondent, the Marquis of Northington, who was resident there in a diplomatic capacity, would make every search for De Sylva; and passing the Pyrenees, entered the frontier of France, though with great risk and hazard, had I been known to be English; but I passed every where for a Spaniard, speaking the language as a native, having from my childhood been accustomed to speak it with Rosolia and Edmund; and I fancied in

those wild mountains I might meet with De Sylva, who was likely to assort with the desperate characters with which they at that time abounded. But vain was my search, and at length I returned to England; and thinking that in London, perhaps, I might find this wretch connected with gamesters, I sought him at every house where such persons are likely to be found; but still, still the search was fruitless.

"I then came hither for awhile, to rest my wearied spirits. Here, vanquished by the constant harassings I had so long undergone, I fell into a severe fit of illness, through which my good Bayfield nursed me with the tenderest care; and as she alone knew all the griefs which oppressed me, I could without restraint give vent to my sorrows in her presence.

"Immediately after my recovery I had a letter from my friend Lord Northington, who had at my request, by himself

and his agents, made every possible inquiry for De Sylva. He informed me that a person of suspicious character had lately been arrested, and stood charged with various crimes; and amongst the rest, of desertion; that from my description of him, he fancied this man to be De Sylva. I instantly wrote to Edmund, that I hoped the object of my long search was found; that I should go to Spain immediately, and would see him as soon as any thing was ascertained: but alas! after all my trouble and fatigue, this man proved to be totally unlike De Sylva, and in no way connected with him.

"Mortified and disappointed, I yet went to Seville, where Edmund then was. The Duke de Castel Nuovo had been dead a few months, and his grandson, under the care of Mr. O'Brien, and some other ecclesiastics, appointed by the Duke's will to be the guardians of his person and his Spanish estates during his minority. It was

not without difficulty that I obtained a private conference with him; for these Catholics were jealous of my supposed influence over his mind.

"I found him greatly altered in person, and evidently a prey to gloomy and anxious thoughts, which the life he led amongst persons of severe and superstitious habits did not tend to dissipate. His prejudices I still found unconquerable, and that he was determined on coming to England, should I be unable clearly to substantiate my innocence, either to avenge his sister's death by the sword, or to impeach me as her murderer—a dreadful alternative, and one from which I knew not how to free myself: for to find De Sylva seemed impossible, and if found, I knew not how to bring him to confession; and even of his having been at my villa, near the Sierra Morena, I had no witness but Mrs. Bayfield, whose evidence in my favour might, and most probably would, be deemed partial.

"Thus, and with this shocking prospect constantly before me, the time has passed since the fatal day of Rosolia's death. Anxious for your peace and safety, I wrote to Edmund, who ought to have been here three months ago, and entreated him to delay coming hither till this time, stating my reasons, with which he complied, and arrived in England only a week since. Hither he was obliged to come, as Mordaunt had all the papers belonging to his estates in his possession. You know he has been too ill lately to go from home, and his signature was absolutely necessary.

"After O'Brien and Mordaunt went into the library last night, I again endeavoured to convince Edmund of my innocence; and although I think now his judgment is matured, and his passions have had time to cool, he is more inclined to believe me, and to let the matter rest where it is, I could by no means get him explicitly to acquit me; and this house

reviving the memory of his sister, and all the past events so forcibly, no doubt was the cause of his nocturnal wandering.

"What will be the event of all this I know not; but if I find him still inexorable in a conference I mean this day to hold with him, I think appearances are so much against me, I must at least for a time withdraw with you and our boy to some safe retreat.

"I have wearied you, my Ellen, and am myself weary with speaking so long, on such an agitating subject: but tell me, my love, oh! tell me, that you at least think me guiltless of this direful act!"

"Guiltless!" cried Ellen (whose many tender exclamations and agitated interruptions had given frequent proof of the interest with which she had heard this melancholy narrative). "Oh, heavens! the evidence of my own senses would fail to make me think you otherwise. But in this case

all appears to me so clear, so easy to be traced, that I am astonished the generous youth you have described can hesitate in his belief a moment.—Ah! my dear St. Aubyn, let *me* speak to him; let me tell him of your virtues, of your gentle nature, of your tender and affectionate disposition. Surely he will hear me: surely he must yield to the conviction these must give, that you were not, could not have been guilty of a deed so horrid!"

"Yes, my dearest, my beloved Ellen," replied St. Aubyn, "it shall be so. Your soft, your persuasive words and looks will, I am sure, impress him with conviction that the man you love cannot be a villain.

"Yet, Ellen, do not meanly compromise my honour or your own dignity; argue, and even, if you can, persuade him to believe me innocent: but if in this you fail, do not sue to him. I could not accept of life and honour merely from his *forbearance;* yet for your sake, and that

of our child, I will in some measure set my proud spirit aside, and yield to terms I would otherwise disdain."

Here they parted, and Ellen retired to her dressing-room, to refresh her wearied spirits, to kiss and weep over her infant, and to offer up a fervent prayer for every grace of speech, which might subdue and convince the prejudiced but generous Edmund.

CHAP. IV.

We do not know
How he may soften at the sight o' the child.
The silence often of pure innocence
Persuades when speaking fails.

WINTER'S TALE.

WITH an air how different from the usual cheerful greetings of the morning at St. Aubyn Castle, did the party now there assemble in the breakfast-room.

The Earl and Countess, wearied with the alarm of the night and the late agitating conversation, scarcely could assume spirits to smile upon their guests, and give them that hospitable reception which every one generally felt assured of from them. Lady Juliana, stiff and severe of countenance, scarcely deigned a bow to the salutations of Mr. O'Brien; and the pale melancholy Edmund, who, constraining his feelings,

advanced towards Lady St. Aubyn, and attempted an apology for what had passed the evening before, for of his nocturnal wanderings, and her consequent alarm, he had not the least idea: from St. Aubyn he appeared to shrink with less aversion than usual, but when seated at the breakfast-table, his eyes and whole attention seemed fixed on Ellen, who, pale and mournful as were her looks, yet spoke with such gentle sweetness, as appeared instantly to attract him, while the soft and pensive character her beauty had assumed was percisely formed to sooth and tranquillize the too vehement emotions of this deeply feeling young man. Her power, indeed, over the heart, of which all who saw her were sensible, arose from the united charms of voice, person, and demeanor, all of which were so sweetly harmonized with each other as to form one charming and consistent whole, and that, so regulated by the most perfect purity of manners, the

most refined delicacy of sentiment, and the most affectionate tenderness of heart, as ensured not only the admiration, but the respect and love of all who knew her; yet more, of all she sought to win or soften. No wonder then if the young and generous heart of Edmund leaned towards her, and felt before the breakfast hour was over that for worlds he could not have pained or wronged her.

Mr. Mordaunt had fixed one o'clock at noon to finish the settlement of all legal concerns between Lord St. Aubyn and Lord De Montfort, the weak state of his health not permitting him to come earlier to the Castle. As soon as breakfast was over, therefore, St. Aubyn invited his guests to walk or ride round the grounds. O'Brien gladly consented, and Laura said she should like to ride with them; but Edmund coldly refused, saying if he went out at all, he should merely stroll by himself a short distance, as he felt languid and unwell. "To you then, my

Ellen," said St. Aubyn, "I recommend our noble guest. I need not I am sure request you to pay him every attention; if possible, prevail on him to stay and dine with us: he talks of going the instant his business is completed."

"I hope, my Lord," said Ellen to De Montfort, "you will not do so. The evenings now close in abruptly, and it will be late before you reach the end of the first stage from hence."

He bowed in silence.

The gentlemen and Miss Cecil went to prepare for their ride; and Ellen, ringing the bell, desired Jane to bring her netting-box thither, for she feared if she went as usual to the nursery, Edmund might escape her, and no other opportunity offer for the conference on which her heart was set.

Lady Juliana, as usual, went to her own room, where she always chose to spend two or three hours of her morning alone.

Edmund had, by the time Ellen was seated at her work, thrown himself in a meditating attitude on a sofa, and was apparently lost in a reverie; yet his eyes were frequently fixed on her, and his countenance seemed to soften as he gazed upon her. She soon saw the little party ride into the park, and then feeling herself secure from interruption, she considered how best to begin her intended conversation:—her heart fluttered, and her fingers entangled her work so completely, that it was impossible to proceed with it. Painful, indeed, was her situation; for to converse on topics so deeply interesting with a young man so very lately an entire stranger was indeed a severe task for the gentle, the timid Ellen. Rousing her spirits, however, for she felt that time fled swiftly, she with a tremulous voice said,

"My Lord, I fear you will think I take too great a liberty with one so lately a stranger, if I venture to enter on a sub-

ject of the most delicate nature, indeed; but one to me so deeply interesting, I cannot consent to let this opportunity pass, since it may be the last I shall ever have of speaking to your Lordship without witnesses."

From the moment she began to speak, De Montfort started from his reverie, and fixed on her an earnest attention, which had, however, so much softness in it, as emboldened her to proceed in a voice somewhat firmer and more assured.

"You may believe, my Lord," she said, "that Lord St. Aubyn has not withheld from me the real cause of the painful scene I last night witnessed, and a degree of agitation in you, not to be accounted for, but by a recital which out of tenderness he till this morning never ventured to make to me."

"Has he then," said Edmund (in that low, solemn, impressive tone which so deeply interested his hearers) "has he then ventured to reveal to you that

horrid event, that deed of blood, the guilt of which he has never been able to throw from him?"

"He has, my Lord, explained to me the meaning of many painful hints; of much uneasiness which I have perceived in him from the first of our acquaintance: but ah! generous, though misled, Lord de Montfort, can you really believe him guilty? Can you doubt the innocence of a man whose life of virtue, whose tender affectionate nature, surely point him out as of all men the least likely to have committed an action so horrid! Surely he cannot have fully and clearly explained to you all the circumstances which preceded this sad event. May I, without too much wounding your feelings, venture to recapitulate what he has told me. Surely a story so clear, so consistent, must at once exonerate him from having had any part in that guilty, that horrid deed."

He bowed assent, and Ellen as suc-

cinctly, but as clearly as possible, brought into one point of view, all the circumstances which were favourable to St. Aubyn, yet veiling with the most touching delicacy and consideration those which bore hardest on the fame of Rosolia; affecting to believe that the wretch De Sylva (whom she asserted St. Aubyn and Mrs. Bayfield had certainly seen at her window the night before) had come without her knowledge, and that the same man, meeting her in the lonely hermitage, had committed the shocking deed for the sake of the valuables she wore.

It seemed as if Edmund had chiefly resisted the evidences in St. Aubyn's favour, lest by yielding to them, he must have pronounced his sister guilty: whether this being now less pressed upon him, or that Ellen herself, fully convinced of St. Aubyn's innocence, and perhaps less impassioned than he had been when stating the same story, had placed circumstances more clearly before him, he

evidently gave greater credence to the tale than he had ever before done. Her sweetness of voice and manner, and the graceful tenderness with which she spoke of St. Aubyn's virtues; of his honourable and disinterested conduct to her, both before and since their marriage, and of the perfect love which bound them to each other, and wrapt her life in his; tears of tenderness and blushes of indignation marked the varying sensations which filled her bosom at the bare idea of his being suspected of such a crime, and animated her beauty with new graces, appeared to impress him deeply with sentiments of admiration and esteem. When she paused, he sighed and said:—

"Is it in nature to resist such a pleader, or to believe the man so loved by one so pure and spotless, can be himself capable of the blackest crimes? No, Lady St. Aubyn, were your natures so dissimilar it would be impossible that you could so love, so confide in him."

At that instant a soft plaintive voice was heard at the opening door, the voice of an infant. Edmund started, for he had forgotten Lady St. Aubyn had recently become a mother, and a painful recollection pressed on his heart of the infant so dearly loved, so deeply lamented, the child of his idolized Rosolia!

The nurse now appeared with the babe in her arms, for wondering at her Lady's unusually lengthened absence from the nursery, she came to request some directions concerning the child: supposing all the gentlemen were gone out together, when she saw Lord De Montfort she would have retreated, but Ellen advancing, took the infant in her arms and said:

"Give him to me, nurse; I will but shew him to Lord de Montfort, and bring him to the nursery myself:" then unfolding his mantle, she pressed him to her tender bosom: and when the nurse was gone, with light graceful steps advancing

towards Edmund, (who rose from his seat to meet her) she said:

"See here, my Lord, a still more powerful pleader; one pure and spotless indeed, whose opening prospects must be clouded, whose innocent name must be blasted, if you persist in your intentions, if you seek his father's destruction. Look at this babe, and tell me if your gentle nature can doom him to such cruel misfortunes as your denunciation of his father must bring upon his guiltless head."

Edmund, the noble Edmund, stooped, and gazing on the child, was not ashamed to shed tears of tenderness and compassion on his sweet face. The lovely creature opened its eyes, and with the same soft look of confiding innocence which marked his mother's features, stretched out his little hands and smiled.

"Oh! this is too much! indeed too much!" exclaimed De Montfort. "I must not be a man to see this sweet, this

lovely infant, and you, angelic woman, and dare to breathe one injurious wish against that man on whom the happiness of both depends! From henceforth I dismiss for ever all my revengeful, perhaps my ill-founded schemes: never shall word or look of mine attempt to injure the happy, the enviable St. Aubyn. Surely Heaven would not have favoured him with felicity so rare, had a deed so cruel as that of which I suspected him stained his soul! I will try to think, to believe so. Assure yourself, at least, loveliest of women, that from me he has nothing more to fear; and may Heaven's choicest blessings be showered on you, and on this sweet, this lovely infant!"

He bent one knee to the ground, and, with reverential awe, kissed Ellen's hand, lifting his expressive eyes towards that Heaven he was invoking in her favour: then rising, he took the babe from her arms, kissed its hands, its cheeks, its lips, and returning it to its mother, with hasty

and agitated steps quitted the apartment; leaving her impressed with feelings of joy, gratitude, and the tenderest esteem for this noble, though somewhat eccentric being.

Folding her babe to her fond maternal heart, which seemed to feel even increased affection for it from the late trying scenes, she passed with it to the nursery, where Laura found her a few minutes after, and announced the return of the gentlemen from their ride.

"Where is St. Aubyn?" said Ellen, with a countenance where tears and smiles contended: "I must see him immediately."

"It is near the time appointed by Mr. Mordaunt to conclude Lord de Montfort's business," said Laura, "and I believe he is gone to his study: but what is the matter, Ellen, you look agitated yet joyful? I never saw you more radiant in beauty; something I am sure has happened to light up your face in this manner."

Ellen smiled, and said, "Oh, flatterer! but I cannot stay to tell you now; only I hope I have been fortunate enough to adjust a difference of long standing between Lord de Montfort and St. Aubyn, and I am impatient to tell my Lord the result of my morning's conversation with the former—here, take the babe, Laura, and keep him if you will till I come again, unless Lady Juliana comes, as usual, and snatches him away." She then hastened to St. Aubyn, whom she found alone, and had just time to tell him the result of the conference she had held with Edmund, but not the particulars, before Mr. Mordaunt and the other gentlemen assembled.

As De Montfort entered the study, Lady St. Aubyn was quitting it, but he stopped her one moment, and said in a low voice, "Stay, madam, and witness your power over me." Then advancing, he held out his hand to St. Aubyn, and

said to him in Italian, which he knew O'Brien did not understand, "Be all our animosity banished for ever." Yet so strong had been, and perhaps still were his prejudices, that the hand he offered trembled, and he turned pale, when St. Aubyn took it.

"I never felt any, Edmund," said he. "I made large allowances for you, and felt towards you a brother's love: my friendship and best offices are your's at all times."

He then apologized to the gentlemen present for speaking a strange language, and accounted for this little scene, by saying, that an unhappy disagreement which had taken place long ago between himself and Lord de Montfort was now fortunately adjusted.

Ellen just staid long enough to congratulate St. Aubyn in a low voice on this happy termination of an affair which cost him so much uneasiness, and turn-

ing to Edmund, she said, " You dine with us, my Lord :" he bowed in silent acquiescence, and she retired, happiest at that moment of the happy.

Lord de Montfort and Mr. O'Brien remained that day at the Castle, and the former, though still at times sunk in reverie, yet was composed; and sometimes almost cheerful. A weight seemed removed from his mind, and though his manner to St. Aubyn was still constrained and distant, there were moments when he appeared with difficulty to prevent himself from appearing friendly and cordial.

Ellen saw, that were they often together, Edmund's long-rooted and cherished prejudices would insensibly wear away; and on that account regretted that he would not be prevailed on to stay longer than till the next morning.

That evening, Laura Cecil, who had been quite pleased to see De Montfort re-

suming in some degree the manners which in his boyhood made him so agreeable, returned to Rose Hill, where Sir Edward Leicester was soon expected, to whom, it was supposed, she would be married before Christmas.

Lord St. Aubyn willingly consented that Ellen should inform his faithful Bayfield of her knowledge of their transactions in Spain, and the happy reconciliation between her Lord and Lord de Montfort; and Bayfield, who almost idolized Ellen before, now considering her as the cause of an event so desirable, felt her love and veneration redoubled.

In the course of the evening, Lord St. Aubyn hinted to Mr. O'Brien, that some of his family had been disturbed by Lord de Montfort's having left his room while sleeping, and Mr. O'Brien said, that after any great emotion, his pupil sometimes did so, but that it rarely happened, frequently not for months together; in re-

ality, no farther disturbance took place, and the two gentlemen departed the next morning, leaving the inhabitants of the Castle with very different sensations from those they had felt at their first arrival.

CHAP. V.

My noble gossips, you have been too liberal;
I thank you for it—so shall this *child*,
When *he* has so much English.

HENRY VIII.

LADY ST. AUBYN had received so little pleasure from visiting London the preceding winter, that she earnestly requested not to remove from the Castle till after Christmas, when Laura entreated her to spend a month or six weeks there after her marriage, and wished, as the Countess had not yet been presented, that ceremony might take place when she was herself introduced: Lord and Lady Delamore were also expected to be in London at that time, and Ellen promised herself great pleasure from becoming acquainted with her. It was therefore determined, that she should

meet Sir Edward, and Laura (who would then be Lady Leicester), in town the beginning of February, and remain quietly in the country till that time, where she would have leisure to fulfil those maternal duties she had voluntarily taken upon herself, and from the due exercise of which her sweet child grew, and improved every day.

Before they left the Castle, the young heir was christened with all due splendour. Sir William Cecil and Sir Edward Leicester, Lady Juliana and Miss Cecil, were sponsors. The christening suit of fine Brussels lace for the infant, over white satin, and a similar dress for the fair mother, were the gift of Lady Juliana; the other sponsors were also very liberal in their presents to their godson.

The hilarity attending this ceremony was not confined within the walls of the Castle, where, however, all the genteeler part of the neighbourhood were elegantly

entertained, while all the poorer sort were most hospitably regaled under some temporary buildings and marquees erected for the purpose in the park, where immense fires dispelled the coldness of winter, at the same time that they served to dress the provisions intended to regale the crowd assembled round them. Each family was also liberally supplied with bread, meat, clothing, and money, according to its numbers and their respective wants; and as Lady St. Aubyn and Miss Cecil, attended by Bayfield and Jane, did not themselves disdain to visit the cottages, and see what was really requisite for the comfort of their inhabitants, every thing was ordered with intelligence and regularity, and imposition almost totally prevented.

Mrs. Neville, the poor officer's widow mentioned before, had for some time been settled as manager of the Schools of Industry, and other useful institutions, which Lady St. Aubyn had set on foot

during the summer: her eldest daughter was gone to " that bourne from which no traveller returns ;" but the others, healthy and happy, were in training for such situations as they seemed calculated to fill. Mrs. Neville was also very useful in distributing the gifts to the poor, and the preparations for their entertainment.

A grand display of fireworks finished the amusements of the evening, for St. Aubyn observed that was the only species of mere entertainment which all ranks and ages could partake of; and in the present instance, he wished not only to benefit, but to gratify all his neighbours.

Miss Alton and Mrs. Dawkins were amongst the company received at the Castle, and so delighted were they with the young heir, so charmed with the splendour and elegance of the repast, that, contrary to usual custom, no lamentations or tender sympathetic sighs disturbed the gaiety of the day.

Soon after this grand fête, the whole family set out for London ; and Lady St. Aubyn, not satisfied with any superintendent of her nursery but Mrs. Bayfield, begged she might go with them, and be removed entirely from the more fatiguing post she had hitherto filled.

Jane, now called Mrs. Williamson, having been for some time under Mrs. Bayfield's direction, was placed in her vacant department, and another, somewhat more fashionable, lady's woman engaged to attend the Countess.

In London they met the new married pair, and the bride's fair sister, Lady Delamore, whose extraordinary beauty excited Ellen's admiration, while her likeness to the sweet departed Juliet involuntarily claimed her affection.

With such very agreeable friends, and under the respectable protection of Lady Juliana, Lady St. Aubyn found London a very different scene from what it had ap-

peared to her the year before: she now possessed also a greater degree of confidence in herself, and having no longer any thing to fear, the gloomy hints of St. Aubyn, and her consequent dread, being for ever explained and removed, she felt a more cheerful flow of spirits, and enjoyed the amusements which were so amply in her power: yet still those spirits were softened by the most retiring delicacy; and those amusements, partaken with moderation and decorum. Still her high character stood unblemished, and even elevated in the public opinion; and the splendour of her beauty, which every one thought but now come to its full perfection, attracted none but *respectful* admirers.

The St. Aubyns frequently saw Lord de Montfort, who had purchased a house in town, and was living in very high style, though still under the direction of Mr. O'Brien, but evidently choosing to be more his own master than he had been in

Spain, to which country he seemed at present to have no thoughts of returning; his grandfather's will having left him free to choose his own residence, though he was under a necessity of visiting Spain at least once in two years.

To Lord St. Aubyn he was polite, though distant: strangers could not have perceived any thing in his manner indicative of dislike or resentment; but those who knew what had passed, could at times discover a particular cast of his eye, a certain tone in speaking to the Earl, which marked a *recollection*, at least, of former enmity, and were by St. Aubyn hardly to be endured.

To Ellen he at all times shewed an attention so devoted, and his expressive eyes displayed so much admiration, that some of those who witnessed them began to fancy they had discovered the cause of that gloom which still overshadowed him, and had, from the time of his first arrival, excited the remarks of every one, and

made him the object of the insipid jests and witless railleries of those who could conceive no cause but *love* for the dejection of a young man who could scarcely count the thousands which swelled his rent-roll.

Love! ill-star'd passion! doom'd vain scorn to bear,
To meet the busy mocker's idle jest;
Nor then allow'd its misery to declare;
Nor then indulge the woe but half supprest.

For of the pure, though enthusiastic attachment he felt for Ellen, such minds could form no idea.

One evening, at the play, whither Lady St. Aubyn went with a large party, amongst whom were Lady Meredith and several gentlemen in her train, they saw in the box opposite to their's Lord de Montfort leaning against the side of it, in his usual state of gloomy apathy---his eyes half closed, his fine hair disordered, and his whole person expressing a sort of desolation, which waked emotions of

pity in Ellen's gentle heart: she could not see him without compassion, he appeared so completely an insulated being, and even in the very morning of life, so totally without any kind connection or affectionate friend to sooth his melancholy---that melancholy, of which she so well knew the original cause, that, as she looked towards him, she could not forbear a sigh; and the sorrow she really felt appeared in her expressive countenance.

Lady Meredith, who had been attentively watching her with a degree of malice, of which Ellen had not supposed her capable, now gently touched Lady St. Aubyn with her fan, and said---

"Upon my word, my dear, I could in pity to the love-sick woe-begone De Montfort have almost wished he could have seen that soft look, and heard that tender sigh: no doubt it would have gone a great way towards rendering him a more cheering object, and that I am

sure we should all have rejoiced in, for at present he really casts a gloom over all our amusements."

"I do not understand you," said Ellen, with surprize.

"Indeed!" replied Lady Meredith: "I hardly supposed you would have carried affectation so far. Here, Hamilton," added she, laughing and turning to the gentleman next her, "Lady St. Aubyn cannot imagine why her pity and a very kind look should have any effect on Lord de Montfort."

"Pity and a gentle look from so much beauty," replied Sir James Hamilton, with affected gravity, "must certainly have a most powerful effect on the heart of any man---assuredly still more on that of one so devoted as De Montfort's appears to be."

"I know not, Sir," said Ellen, with modest grace, yet with spirit, "if I am to consider this as a specimen of that

fashionable sort of wit which you call quizzing or hoaxing. Are not these the *elegant* terms of the day? But I am willing to think it no more, as I am convinced you cannot seriously lose sight of the respect you owe me as a married woman, so far as to imagine Lord de Montfort can feel, or I permit, a greater degree of attachment than his long connection with Lord St. Aubyn may well account for."

Then turning to St. Aubyn, she said in a gay tone---

"Help me, my Lord, to convince Lady Meredith that Lord de Montfort has really not fallen violently in love with me: how far he may entertain such a sentiment for her, I will not pretend to say."

St. Aubyn laughed, and said---

"For his own sake, Ellen, I hope he has not been so improvident as to dispose of his heart in your favour; though

I should be happy to hear he had selected any fair one at liberty to reward his passion."

This well-timed appeal to her husband, and the unembarrassed manner with which both had spoken, effectually silenced those who hoped to have extracted much amusement from the confusion of the timid and delicate Ellen.

Presently afterwards, on meeting her eyes, De Montfort's seemed lighted up with pleasure, and quitting his box, he came to that where she sat. St. Aubyn seeing a little smile still playing on the countenances of Lady Meredith and some of her gay friends, determined to shew his perfect confidence in his wife, turned round to him, and said---

"De Montfort, how are you? I am quite glad you found us out, for nothing is more stupid than being at the play without a party. We have plenty of room: go and sit between Lady Meredith and Lady St. Aubyn; I am sure I shall

make you happy by placing you there, they are both such favourites: we have just been disputing which of them you preferred."

"You did me great honour," replied Edmund, "in speaking of me at all."

"St. Aubyn only jests," said Ellen: "we were not, I assure you, debating on the subject."

"No, indeed," replied Lady Meredith, laughing, "that question may be easily settled: we were all unanimously agreed, I assure you, my Lord."

Edmund, not exactly liking the turn of her countenance, was going to reply with some warmth, and probably might, with that chivalric gallantry which marked his character, have openly avowed, what he undoubtedly thought, that Ellen was the first and most admirable of women, if she had not stopt him by saying---

"Oh, pray Lord De Montfort, let Lady Meredith enjoy the diversion she

is seeking: she has been in a teasing humour the whole evening."

"Pray, Lady Meredith," said Lady Juliana, with a grave air, "let us have no more of this rattle: Lady St. Aubyn is not fashionable enough to wish to be the *favourite* of any man but her husband."

"Oh, for heaven's sake!" cried Lady Meredith, "do not let us make a serious business of it. Be assured, my dear Lady St. Aubyn, I had no intention of getting you a grave lecture: though really," she added, in a low tone, "I was quite in hopes you were going to be a little like other people, and not be kept in awe any longer by that starched specimen of old maidenism. You cannot think, my dear, how much a little flirting would improve your beauty: then it gives an air of ease and fashion, which, *entre nous*, is the only thing you want to make you quite enchanting."

Ellen only smiled at this rattle, but with an air so little encouraging, she

soon put an end to it; yet, to one less fixed in principle, Lady Meredith would have been a dangerous companion; and certain it is, more women are ruined by listening to precepts of this nature, half in earnest, half in jest, accompanied by a sort of *persiflage* which few can withstand, than even by the wiles of men: against these a woman of virtue is on her guard; but she listens without fear to a female older than herself, and whom she thinks better versed in the ways of the world, till insensibly she adopts the same sentiments, and acquires that hateful worldly tone which affects to laugh at every thing serious and praiseworthy.

Ellen, however, was not so easily misled: her natural penetration detected the fallacy; and all the shafts of Lady Meredith's ridicule fell, by her, unheeded.

On the way home, Lady Juliana inveighed bitterly against the flirting manners and ill-judged raillery of Lady Me-

redith, who, she said, instead of improving as she grew older, was every year worse and worse, and was enough to spoil the conduct of a whole nation of women.

"Pray, my dear," said she, "don't you be led by her nonsense: I hope she will not persuade you to follow her example. Indeed, nephew, I wondered at you for placing that odd, wild-looking young De Montfort next my niece: he does not please me at all."

In short, the old lady was so thoroughly out of humour, that they were very glad to set her down at her own house.

Two or three days after this, Lord de Montfort took leave of the St. Aubyns, before he left London, on his way with a party of young men to see Oxford and Cambridge, and afterwards to go to the Lakes, not meaning to be again in London till September. He carried with him the most exalted opinion of Lady St. Aubyn, but he thought of her rather

as an angel than a woman, and was devoted to her with a purity of attachment inconceivable by the worldly-minded.

CHAP. VI.

She sees once more those lovely plains expand,
Where the first flow'ret lured her infant hand.
No where she thinks the sun so mildly gleams,
As on the banks where first she drank its beams:
So green no other mead, so smiles no other land!
Thou little spot, where first I suck'd the light,
Thou witness of my earliest smile and tear—
Loved haunt!

SOTHEBY'S OBERON.

NOTHING more of any moment occurred during the stay of Lord and Lady St. Aubyn in London, for De Montfort's departure, and the perfect attachment which subsisted between the noble pair, silenced those tongues, and stopped those remarks, which Edmund's too obvious admiration had prepared to annoy Lady St. Aubyn.

They left London early in April, and spent the month of May at St. Aubyn's, being old-fashioned and *tasteless* enough

not to find any pleasure in broiling through the hot months in the metropolis, and leaving the

"Opening lawns, deep glooms, and airy summits,"

of their own domain untenanted in the most attractive season of the year.

From St. Aubyn's Castle, the long talked of journey into Wales was to commence. Ellen longed once more to revisit the haunts of her infancy, and to see her father and her early friends; and St. Aubyn willingly consented to gratify her.

The child was to travel with them, attended by the faithful Bayfield and his nurses: they waited till the end of May, knowing that the bad roads of North Wales would be hardly passable at an earlier period.

They went from St. Aubyn's to Shrewsbury, and from thence to Carnarvon, stopping on the way, as in their former journey, to see all that was worthy of

observation; and as this route was entirely different from that they had before taken, many new objects presented themselves to their notice. Amongst other picturesque scenes, they passed the woody banks of the Dee, whence they obtained a striking view of the beautiful and romantic town of Llangollen, with its church, and elegant bridge, embosomed in trees.

At Llangollen they rested, and though it has in itself nothing particularly interesting, yet its environs afford much sublime and pleasing scenery: amongst these the Vale of Crucis is one of the most lovely secluded situations that fancy can pourtray; it is adorned by the fine remains of Valle Crucis Abbey, and its back-ground, formed by a lofty mountain, on whose summit stands the venerable ruin of Castle Dinas Bran.

After seeing all that was deserving observation in this charming spot, they proceeded through a fine romantic coun-

try to Carnarvon, and from thence to Llanwyllan.

The latter part of the roads were intolerably bad, and the English servants, who had never seen any think like them, were in momentary expectation of having their necks broken; indeed, Lord Mordaunt's nurses walked several miles, fearing lest the baby should be injured; and in truth, even Ellen, though fearless for herself, felt a little uneasy for the infant.

All these perils and dangers, however, at length happily past, and Ellen's heart beat with ecstacy when she saw the white chimnies of Llanwyllan Farm peeping above the ancient oaks around it. The carriages stopt before the house, and in an instant Ellen was folded in the arms of her father: her fair face pressed tenderly to the rough cheek of the good old man, while the mingled drops of filial love and parental affection fell in showers from their eyes: repeatedly Powis clasp-

ed his lovely daughter to his heart, and felt enraptured, that though "so great a lady, his dear Ellen had not forgotten him:" at length he was at leisure to see and speak to his noble son-in-law, and the awkward air of respect he endeavoured to assume was soon changed to one of more cordial affection by the kind greeting Lord St. Aubyn gave him. In the meantime Ellen stept into the hall where the nurses and servants were waiting, and taking the infant from Mrs. Bayfield, returned with him into the parlour, and with delighted looks, placed him in her father's arms.

Oh, moment of exquisite bliss! moment which might have repaid the sorrows of many years! Can there be in this world an instant of such pure delight as the daughter feels when she places her first-born on the bosom of a venerable parent.

Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven;

> And if there be a human tear
> From passion's dross refined and clear,
> A tear so limpid and so meek
> It would not stain an angel's cheek;
> 'Tis that which pious fathers shed
> Upon a duteous daughter's head.
>
> SCOTT'S LADY OF THE LAKE.

Mrs. Ross's domestic talents had been exerted to the utmost to prepare Llanwyllan Farm in the best possible manner for its noble guests: she did not indeed quite understand all the various arrangements which are absolutely necessary for the tolerable comfort of such a family; but with the assistance of Dame Grey, who picqued herself on remembering how things used to be when she lived at 'Squire Davis's, and the ready aid of the active Joanna, every thing was far beyond Ellen's expectations; and as she encouraged no fine lady-like airs in her nursery attendants, nor even in her own woman, none of those vexatious murmurs disturbed her which servants often

have the happy art of contriving where no real cause for complaint exists; and certainly the furniture for the nursery was not quite so rich as Lady Juliana had chosen for that at the Castle: the nurses found that the young Lord slept quite as well, and his cheeks bloomed quite as freshly beneath the clean white cotton hangings of this little couch as under the quilted satin cradle at St. Aubyn's.

The whole party was speedily arranged, for there was plenty of room and abundance of provisions.

The Earl and Countess had brought no more servants than were absolutely necessary; and Bayfield, highly as she was respected by her noble employers, was not above directing the management of their table, or any other domestic office which could make her useful; and though Powis, at first, thinking her a much greater lady than he had been ac-

customed to associate with, was very much disposed to treat her as his equal; she soon convinced him by her respectful conduct towards her lady's father that she considered herself as greatly his inferior.

As soon as Ellen had looked round the house, and seen the arrangements for her child's accommodation settled, she began to be anxious to see her good friends the Rosses; and finding from her father they talked of not coming till the next day, she begged him to give her his arm, and she would walk to the Parsonage: all fatigue, she said, had vanished from the moment she found herself beneath her father's roof.

"Come, my dear father," said she, "let us all go: the baby shall come too: the dear good people will be delighted to see us; they will give us some tea, and we can return here to eat our fruit supper: you know we never used to eat any

thing else at night, and I hope the cream is as good as it used to be when I managed the dairy."

Powis looked with delight on the sweet unaffected creature, who was, as he expressed himself afterwards to Mrs. Ross, "Not a bit set up by her high fortune, but just as she used to be when only Ellen Powis."

The infant now "awaking from his rosy nap," and arrayed with the nicest care, his lovely face shaded by a rich lace border to his cap, and his fine cambric robe cut to shew his fair bosom and dimpled arms, with his beautiful mother in a plain white gown and straw hat, attended by St. Aubyn and Powis, set out for the Parsonage.

On the way, Ellen spoke with the sweetest condescension to all she met, and many of the villagers who knew she was arrived contrived to throw themselves in her way.

Mrs. Howel, who used to do her many little services at the market-town, happened now to cross her path, and profoundly courtesying, would have passed on, but Ellen, saying---"Excuse me a moment, my dear St. Aubyn," turned and ran after her.

"How do you do, Mrs. Howel?" said she, holding out her hand, which the good woman hardly ventured to touch, again courtesying.

Ellen made kind inquiries for all her family by name; and seeing her old neighbour's eyes involuntarily wandering towards the child, as if she anxiously wished, but was ashamed to ask a nearer view of him, she beckoned the nurse to bring him towards her, and said:---

"Do look at my little boy, Mrs. Howel: is he not a fine fellow?"

"Ah, Madam," said the good woman, "he is the loveliest babe I ever saw, except your Ladyship, at the same age.---

God bless him, and God bless you, Madam; for you deserve every kind of happiness."

"Thank you, thank you, my good neighbour. Come to the Farm and see us when it is convenient: at present, my Lord is waiting for me, so good-bye." And she lightly ran on, leaving the farmer's wife charmed and delighted by her sweetness and kind attention.

They soon reached the Parsonage, and were received with unaffected joy.

Great indeed, at first, was the bustle of poor Mrs. Ross, who, not hoping for such an honour, was not drest, nor her parlour, though always neat, in that high state of preparation it would have been had she expected them; but she was soon convinced that the string of apologies she meditated were totally unnecessary, by finding the warm-hearted Ellen first in her own arms, and leaving them to fly to those of Joanna, and then with sweet filial reverence bending to the kind parental em-

brace of the venerable Ross. St. Aubyn and the good Powis, in the meantime, stood gazing on her with rapturous emotion, and both thinking there never was so enchanting a creature. The babe was admired, caressed, and finally pronounced a prodigy of beauty and early apprehension, and his sweet good-humoured smiles were uninterrupted even by one frown, though handed from one to the other with raptures which would have made an infant of a less amiable disposition cross and fretful.

"Well, my excellent friend," said St. Aubyn, aside to Ross, "you see once more your lovely pupil, from whom you parted with so much regret, not, I hope, injured either in person or mind by her intercourse with the great world. Oh, my good Sir, how infinitely am I indebted to you for implanting principles in her youthful bosom which have stood the test of many trying scenes. You and I must have a great deal of conversation,

and I know you will be charmed to hear how admirably she conducts herself on all occasions."

"I *am* charmed," said Ross, while an affectionate tear stood in his eye, "charmed with all I see and hear of both: indeed, my Lord, that lovely unaffected creature adorns the rank to which you have raised her: the choice you made reflects as much honour on your penetration as I hope it will ensure happiness to your future life; nor could any young person have better stood the trying test of sudden elevation, of that admiration which doubtless has surrounded her. Now see how sweetly she returns to us without one high air, one look of dissatisfaction at the inferiority of accommodations or manners she must see.

"Polite as all her life in courts had been,
Yet good as she the courts had never seen."

"You have, indeed," said St. Aubyn,

"most happily characterized her; but you cannot think half so highly of her as I have reason to do."

By this time the tea was over; and Ellen, wrapping up her boy, sent him home; but instead of returning with him, she remained at the Parsonage all the evening, delighted herself, and delighting all around her.

"Well," said Mrs. Ross, after her visitors were departed, "well, I never saw any thing in my life so strange! Why, I thought to have seen a fine lady, all dressed in silks and jewels, and looking stiff and formal-like; and I thought to have said, my Lady Countess, and your Ladyship—and behold! here she comes in a plain white gown, but little better than one I scolded her for wearing once —you remember it, Joanna?—And flies to me, kisses me, and calls me dear mamma, as she used to do; and if I had been to have died for it, I could not call her any thing but Ellen, and child, the

whole evening almost, except once or twice I recollected myself, and said my Lady, when we were at the window together, and she put her dear arms round my neck, and said dear mamma, I am *your* Ellen!---and then she is grown such a beauty!—to be sure, she always was as pretty a creature as could be I thought, but now she looks somehow so sensible, and so happy; and then her carriage is so easy, and yet so grand, that if I did not know to the contrary, I should think she was born a great princess.—And then the sweet baby---with his little laughing mouth, and pretty eyes!---And my Lord too, to be so kind---that I once as good as told I wished he would go away from Llanwyllan: and so I did wish it, for could I ever have thought it would come to such honour and happiness for Ellen!"

Ross and Joanna listened with smiles to this long harangue, and though not quite so fluent in their praises, were at

least equally charmed and delighted with herself.

St. Aubyn and his Ellen remained thus beloved and happy at Llanwyllan for some time, during which Ellen visited with the utmost kindness every farm-house of which she had formerly known the inhabitants, and gladdening every poor cottage not only with her smiles, but with more substantial marks of her favour and benevolence.

In the course of the first fortnight Ellen learned that there was a mutual attachment between her friend Joanna and a young clergyman, who did the duty of a parish not more than three miles from those filled by the worthy Ross, and learning from that good man that he had no objection to the match, for that Mr. Griffiths was a man of excellent character, and well suited to Joanna, both in age and temper, and that the only possible objection was the narrowness of his income, and there being no parsonage-

house on the living he served, nor any house within many miles where they could reside, she consulted with her Lord, and the next opportunity said to Ross:

"My dear Sir, I have a proposal to make to you. It is the mutual request of my Lord and myself, and you cannot think how much you will oblige us by complying."

"I know not," said Ross, "what I could refuse to either of you."

"My father," said she, "complains much of the loneliness of his winter evenings; yet he does not like to remove from Llanwyllan and come to live near us, as we earnestly wished him to do; but he says our modes of life are so different from those to which he has been accustomed, and the journey appears so alarmingly long to him, who has never been fifty miles from home, that he says he must be contented with the hope of seeing us here sometimes, and end his

life where he began it. But ah, my dear Sir, his wishes, as well as our's, are, that you and Mrs. Ross would remove to Llanwyllan Farm, and leave this house for Joanna and your future son-in-law. You are now, we all think, too much advanced in life to serve three churches, as you have done for many years: give up two of them to Mr. Griffiths, with the stipend attached to them: and surely, surely, my dearest Sir, you will not refuse from Ellen, from your little pupil, a trifling token of her love to make your life and dear Mrs. Ross's comfortable, and to enable you to give Joanna to her lover with a sufficiency to make them easy."

She rose, and putting a pocket-book into his hand, said, "Not one word: I will not hear one word. For once, your Ellen will be obstinate, and not listen even to *you*."

She ran out of the room, and seeking Joanna, made her put on her bonnet, and come with her to dine at the Farm,

leaving a gay message with Mrs. Ross, that she should hope to hear a favourable answer to her request the next day.

This hint was sufficient to send the good lady to know of Ross what Lady St. Aubyn meant: she found him overwhelmed with tender gratitude. The pocket-book contained notes to a large amount, with a slip of paper containing these words:

My dear Sir,

I have adapted the enclosed rather to your very limited wishes than to my own sense of what I ought to have done. Pray let this little transaction never be mentioned more, unless any plan more pleasing to you than that I shall propose when I give you this should occur to you. If my request be at all unpleasant to you, pray reject it without hesitation.

Your ever obliged

Ellen St. Aubyn.

Ross now explained to his wife what had passed, and they both agreed no plan could be devised more desirable for all parties; and that it would be both rude and ungrateful to refuse a present, which, however, they sincerely wished had been of less value.

All was soon finally settled to the great joy of Powis, who was delighted with the idea of his friendly inmates. The young lovers also were full of grateful joy, and Ellen relinquished the idea she had at one time entertained of taking Joanna home with her: Ross objected to it, as he did not wish her to be introduced into scenes of life so different from those she had been, or ever would be again accustomed to; and Griffiths did not like the idea of her going to such a distance: nay, Joanna herself, much as she had wished to see St. Aubyn Castle, seemed now very well contented to remain for life in the vale of Llanwyllan.

CHAP. VII.

The sky it seems would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. Oh! the cry did knock
Against my very heart!—Poor souls, they perish'd!

SHAKESPEARE'S TEMPEST.

ST. AUBYN had related to Ross the conclusion of those circumstances which he had confided to him before his marriage with Ellen, and though that venerable man rejoiced that Edmund's vindictive intentions had been so happily conquered, neither he nor the Earl felt entirely satisfied on the subject.

Lord De Montfort was certainly an excentric character, and it was possible his impetuous feelings might yet take another direction, especially if the bigotted Catholics, by whom he generally was

surrounded, should obtain any intimation of those apparent facts which militated so much against the character of St. Aubyn, and which only his own word opposed; and that they might do so, was by no means improbable, when his occasional night-wanderings were remembered, in which, as he had done to Ellen, he might hereafter to some other reveal what would induce them to insist on an explanation.

Ellen, it was true, had so touched him with admiration and tenderness, that he could not resist her influence, but now removed from any chance of seeing her again, there was no saying what new turn his ardent imagination would take.

All these ideas, which St. Aubyn had carefully concealed from his wife, he communicated to his venerable friend, who could not deny their rationality. The wishes of both centered in one point, and that was the discovery of De Sylva; and nothing could be more im-

probable than that he should now be found after years had elapsed, in which the agents of St. Aubyn, and of the Marquis of Northington, had sought him in vain, though their search had been extended through every great city in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and England: it was, in fact, most likely, either that he was dead, or had so completely changed his appearance and name as to be living obscurely, perhaps on one of the very spots where they had vainly endeavoured to find him.

These wishes and reflections they never discussed except when without other witnesses, being mutually unwilling to impart any of their anxieties to Lady St. Aubyn, who, happy in her benevolent plans, in the society of her father and early friends, in the improving beauty and health of her lovely boy, and the undeviating and encreasing love of St. Aubyn, seemed not to have a care remaining.

From Charles Ross, about this time, his father received letters, expressive of the happiness he felt in his present situation, and of gratitude to Lord St. Aubyn, who had procured it for him, adding, he hoped to remain on his present station for some months, as they were constantly taking prizes, and his share already amounting to a considerable sum of money.

The Earl or Countess never mentioned either to his parents or sister his mad mistake respecting them during his stay in London, nor the mischievous consequences of it, unwilling to give them pain by a knowledge of those unpleasant transactions.

The situation of Llanwyllan was not above a mile from the sea-shore, and frequently Ellen and Joanna, attended by the nurses and child, walked thither, Lady St. Aubyn thinking that the fine breeze invigorated and strengthened both herself and little Constantine; nor had

the indulgences which her unexpected elevation had procured for her rendered her unequal to a long country ramble, or less pleased to explore the haunts of her infancy. Frequently St. Aubyn and Mr. Griffiths, who was a sensible intelligent young man, with the education and manners of a gentleman, were their escorts: but there was nothing to fear on this unfrequented shore, for though ships often passed at a distance, there was not even a fishing town within three miles of their accustomed walk.

About the middle of July, the weather for three or four days became so excessively hot, as seemed to preclude any exercise, except very late in the evening: this uncommon degree of warmth was followed by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning; and though the weather cleared a little in the middle of the day, the evening again closed with a renewal of the tempestuous weather, attended by a violent wind.

While the weather had been tolerable, the Rosses had walked to the Farm to spend the remainder of the day, and were there when the tempest began again with added horrors, and indeed not one of the party was totally without alarm, lest the violence of the wind should injure the ancient mansion.

One of the men who had been sent to Carnarvon in the morning on some commission, and whose road lay near the sea, returned about nine o'clock. The thunder and lightning had by that time abated, but the violent wind continued, attended by torrents of rain and excessive darkness. This man said he had seen a large ship near the coast, and evidently in great danger, from the beach on which she was driving being rocky and inaccessible, the tide coming in, and the wind blowing from the sea, which he said was rougher than he had ever seen it, and the ship laboured so much he feared she must be lost.

This account soon travelled from the servants'-hall to the parlour: the cheeks of the females were blanched by terror, and Mrs Ross, clasping her hands together, exclaimed,

"God preserve my poor Charles!"

"He is far enough from hence, my dear," said the good Ross, "and in all probability quite out of the way of this tremendous weather."

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Ross, "but I never hear the wind blow without thinking of him, and a sailor's life is so uncertain, one never knows where they are, or what they are exposed to."

While she spoke, they distinctly heard the sound of a gun fired at sea.

"Hark!" said St. Aubyn, "that is a signal gun! and again! another!---those are guns of distress: can we do nothing for these poor creatures?"

"Oh! try, pray try," said Ellen: "but without exposing yourselves to danger, it is, I fear, impossible."

"There will be no danger for us in going down to the shore," said St. Aubyn. "You and I, my young friend," (speaking to Griffiths) "with the men servants, and all the assistance we can collect in the village, will hasten thither: we can at least light some fires on the beach, or make signals of some kind or other, which may be of service; you, my dear Sir," (speaking to Powis) "and Mr. Ross, will stay and sooth the fears of the ladies."

"Oh, but," said Ellen, "do not expose yourselves too much: the weather is dreadful."

"We will take care of ourselves, my love, depend upon it: there are plenty of box-coats in the hall; we will wrap ourselves up, and if we save one life our trouble will be amply repaid."

"God bless you for your goodness," said Mrs. Ross, "and prosper your undertaking! Oh! these poor sailors have perhaps mothers and sisters praying for

them, as we do for poor Charles." She wept, and Joanna and Ellen could not restrain their tears.

The gentlemen, attended by all St. Aubyn's male servants, and several stout workmen belonging to the Farm, now sallied forth with lanterns, and such torches as could be hastily prepared: their numbers were considerably augmented by many of the villagers, who, independent of the rewards St. Aubyn offered, were prompted by humanity and curiosity to assist.

They soon reached the shore, on which a high tide was violently beating; and by the flashes of lightning, which, though fainter and less frequent, still at intervals broke the total darkness of the night, they soon discerned a ship of considerable size, now very near the shore; her sails rent in pieces, and scarcely a mast standing, driving towards them, and firing minute guns as signals of distress. They all saw that to prevent her being stranded

on that rocky and impracticable coast was totally impossible, and therefore some of the men were dispatched to the village for ropes and other articles which might be used in saving the lives of the crew. In the meantime, those remaining on the shore collected all the rubbish they could find, and lighted two or three large fires, shouting when the wind lulled a little, to encourage the sailors, which a minute after was answered by a shout from the men on board.

In less than an hour after their arrival, the ship was driven on a ledge of rocks, almost at the foot of the cliff on which St. Aubyn and his party stood; and they saw some of the crew crowding into two small boats, and others coming on shore on pieces of timber, or whatever they could find. At intervals they rose or disappeared, as the waves were more or less powerful; but in the end, a considerable number, more dead than alive, were thrown on the land.

Several of the men, cheered by large promises from St. Aubyn, waded as far as possible into the sea, and assisted some of the crew with ropes and by other means, so that at last more than fifty men were saved.

To paint the gratitude of these poor creatures, their mingled exclamations of joy for their escape, and horror at the recollection of their danger, would be a vain attempt. Some of them appeared to be foreigners, and two or three wore the dress of Turks. Amid the darkness and confusion that prevailed, however, it was scarcely possible to distinguish one person from another. Several of the English sailors (for the ship had evidently been English, and the foreigners were apparently prisoners of war), were busily engaged in succouring a man who had come to shore with scarcely any signs of life, and about whom they appeared very assiduous.

St. Aubyn's people had brought spirits

and other cordials to the sea-shore, and after administering such present refreshment as their wants seemed to require, he now put all that were able to walk under the care of Griffiths, desiring him not to take them to the Farm, fearing lest the sight should be too affecting to its female inhabitants, but dispose of them in the best manner he could, amongst the cottages or barns belonging to the farmhouses; for in the abodes of all, his bounty and kindness had procured a welcome reception for any whom he chose to send; he requested Griffiths also just to shew himself at the Farm, to say they were safe, and then return again. Some of his party he dispatched for carts, with blankets, &c. to convey to the village such of the men who were unable to walk.

The storm by this time had nearly subsided, and a late moon began to struggle through the black clouds which still hung upon the horizon: pieces of the unfortunate vessel, with seamens'

chests and other articles, were from time to time thrown ashore; several bodies also came to land, and St. Aubyn found, though at least fifty had been saved, several lives were unfortunately lost.

St. Aubyn now saw that the young man, about whom the sailors had been so assiduous, and whom they called Captain, was beginning to revive, and approached to speak some words of consolation and kindness. One of the sailors was giving him a glass of wine, while another held a lantern almost close to him; for the faint light of the moon hardly served to distinguish objects. But what was the surprize, what the tumultuous emotions of St. Aubyn, when, as the light fell full upon the ship-wrecked, half-expiring object before him, he retraced the features of Charles Ross!---of him, for whom, but two hours before, his mother had expressed so many tender fears, and poured so many fervent prayers,

though not even imagining he shared the actual danger which excited them.

St. Aubyn started, but with tender caution, lest the surprize should overpower the unfortunate man, whispered to his servants not to name him or the place where they were; and approaching still nearer, he took Charles's cold hand, and drawing his own hat over his face, bade him be comforted, for all would yet be well.

The poor young man, too languid to do more than glance his eyes over the person who addressed him, spoke a few words in a faint voice, expressive of his thanks, and then feebly murmured a request to know on what coast he and his friends had been thrown.

"On no unfriendly, no inhospitable shore, assure yourself," replied St. Aubyn. "Whatever property the sea spares will be cautiously protected for you and your followers. Many chests have been thrown on shore; and as the weather is

becoming calm, when the morning dawns, the boats of your ship shall go off to the wreck, and every thing of value, if possible, be saved."

"I am then on English ground?"

"On the coast of Wales."

"Of Wales! Oh, heavens!----What part of Wales?"

"Be not impatient: you shall know all in good time."

"That voice," said Charles---"surely I have heard that voice before."

"I have been a great traveller," replied St. Aubyn:" we may have met elsewhere."

Charles asked a few more questions, to which St. Aubyn cautiously replied; and a cart being by this time arrived from the village, Charles and two or three others were placed in it, under the escort of Griffiths, to whom the Earl recounted the late interesting discovery, requesting him to take care that Charles was not

too suddenly surprised with a knowledge of where he was.

Griffiths saw him safely lodged in the best place that could be found for him; and leaving St. Aubyn's valet to watch by him, and take care that no one spoke to him till his return, hastened with Lord St. Aubyn to Powis's, where they found the whole family had been up all night, anxious beyond expression; and when Ellen saw St. Aubyn dripping wet, his hat and great coat heavy with the rain and spray of the sea, she tenderly reproached him for so exposing himself, while Joanna's looks read the same lecture to Griffiths: but both were so rejoiced at the good their exertions had effected, that the chiding was little heeded; and soon, by the assistance of dry cloathing, they made a more comfortable appearance; and after dispatching as many necessaries as could be collected to the poor mariners, and above all to Charles (though yet his

being so near was kept a profound secret to his parents and friends), the whole party retired to rest, which indeed the fatigues of the night rendered extremely necessary to all.

CHAP. VIII.

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye : that close aspect of his
Does shew the mood of a much-troubled heart!

KING JOHN.

ST. AUBYN would not disturb the repose of Ellen that night, or rather that morning, for the sun had risen before they retired, by mentioning the discovery of Charles amongst the shipwrecked mariners; but his own anxiety how best to break the matter to Ross and his wife would not allow him to sleep late, in spite of the fatigue he had undergone.

As soon as he was drest, he went to the cottage where Charles had been placed, and found him greatly recovered: he had been greatly exhausted during the storm, which had lasted longer at sea than at land: he had laboured with unceasing activity to save the ship, of which

he was the commander, though he had not the rank of captain, and had not left her till all hope of her escaping was lost: he was also considerably bruised, for he would not embark in the boats, but had floated to land on a piece of timber. Rest, however, had in some measure recruited his strength, and though still languid, he hoped to be able to rise in the course of the day, and see what could be done to save his property, and that of his shipmates.

All this St. Aubyn learned from his valet, who sat by the young man, and prevented any one from approaching who might too suddenly have informed him his parents were so near.

St. Aubyn, however, now judged it proper this information should reach him: he went therefore to the little room where Charles lay—it was darkened as much as possible; and St. Aubyn sat down by his bed-side without being recognized. He inquired with great kind-

ness for the health of the invalid, to which Charles replied he was better: "But surely," added he, "I have heard that voice before: even amid the horrors of last night, when it was so generously exerted in comforting me, and directing others for the comfort of my poor shipmates, it struck me as one deeply engraved on my memory, though I cannot recollect the name of its owner."

"It is a voice," said St. Aubyn, "you certainly have heard before: I recognize your's also, and know your name---it is Ross."

"It is, indeed," said Charles: "pray tell me your's, for it is cheering to think I am not quite amongst strangers."

"You will be convinced you are not, when I tell you my name is St. Aubyn."

"St. Aubyn? *Lord* St. Aubyn?"

"The same."

"Oh, how much do I owe to you!" exclaimed Charles: "I blush to remember my former ingratitude and folly."

"Speak no more of it—it is quite forgotten."

"Ah, my Lord, how good you are. But did you not say last night we were on the coast of Wales? Tell me, I beseech you, on what part of that coast. I begin to hope, knowing Lady St. Aubyn's former residence.

He paused breathless, with contending emotions.

"Lady St. Aubyn and myself," replied St. Aubyn calmly, "are on a visit to some *friends* in this neighbourhood. The storm of last night, and the hearing a ship was in distress, induced me to take out my servants and some others to see if we could be of any service to the unfortunate mariners. One of the friends we were with blessed me, and prayed that my undertaking might prosper. Her prayers were heard: they were the fervent supplication of a *mother* for her *son*, though then she knew not nor could believe he was implicated in the danger."

"Ah! Heavens!" exclaimed Charles, "it was *my* mother! Speak, my Lord, speak! Are we not at, or near Llanwyllan?"

"Be composed, and I will tell you."

"I am composed, and able to hear all."

"You are at Llanwyllan. Your father, mother, and Joanna, were obliged by the storm of last night to remain at Powis's: there I left them sleeping in peace, not knowing or imagining their son and brother was so near."

The tears ran down the cheeks of Charles, and his heart swelled high with thankfulness both to his earthly and heavenly preserver.

After a few minutes, for St. Aubyn was glad to see his emotions find a relief so desirable, and would not interrupt him, he grasped the hand which the Earl had given him, and would have said something expressive of his gratitude, but St. Aubyn prevented him by saying:

"Not a word on that score, Mr. Ross: mine was the impulse of mere humanity, and I rejoice truly that it led me to save a life so dear to friends greatly respected by me and Lady St. Aubyn. Make your mind easy. I hope in the course of the day you will be in a state to be placed beneath your father's roof; in the meantime I will prepare his mind, and those of your mother and sister, for a meeting so tender; and there is also another friend at Llanwyllan who will be glad to see you: your former playmate and youthful companion, Ellen, will rejoice in your safety. Be at rest; all will go well, and I trust even your property will go secured, for boats are already gone off to the wreck, and I have sent such persons as I can depend on, to see all that is saved protected from depredation."

"You are too good, my Lord; too good!" said Charles, quite overpowered.

"I must now leave you," said St. Aubyn: "our mutual friends will expect

me, and I have an arduous task in prospect, for I dread the effect on the minds of your parents of the disclosure I must now make to them."

He now took his leave, directing every possible care to be taken of the invalid.

St. Aubyn waited till after breakfast to unfold to Ross and his wife the late events; when that meal was concluded, they talked of returning to the Parsonage, but he requested them not to go, for he had something of great consequence to tell them: he then in the gentlest and most judicious manner revealed to them the discovery of the night before, and they supported the communication better than he had expected.

The pious Ross lifted his eyes and heart to Heaven in thankfulness for his son's wonderful escape, while Mrs. Ross and Joanna sobbed upon each others bosom, and mingled tears with their expressions of joy and gratitude. Ellen dropt a tear of tender sympathy, and re-

joiced, without fear of offending the no longer jealous St. Aubyn, in the safety of her early friend.

In the afternoon, Charles found himself able to rise, and St. Aubyn sent his carriage to convey him to the Parsonage, where Ellen and himself were ready to receive him, and to support the spirits of his venerable parents and tender sister.

They all bore the meeting with tolerable composure, and, the first emotions past, were eager to hear how Charles, whom they had supposed to be cruizing near Gibraltar, happened to be exposed to the fury of a storm on the coast of North Wales.

He told them, that almost immediately after the date of the last letters he wrote to them, orders had been received for the return of the vessel he commanded to England, and after refitting at Falmouth to join a small squadron which was cruising off the coast of France: that on his return homeward he had fallen in with a French

frigate, superior to his own in force, but which, after an obstinate battle, during which his own vessel had been much injured, he had succeeded in taking; that he had put some of his own officers and men aboard the prize, and had taken some of the French and some Algerines, whom they had previously captured, on board his own ship; that the violence of the storm and the disabled state of his vessel, prevented him from making the port he wished to have done, and finally had driven him on that coast, the darkness of the night not allowing him to ascertain where-abouts he was: what was become of his prize he knew not, but as she was a better sailer than his own ship, it was probable she had reached some port on the coast of Cornwall in safety.

"And now, my dear mother," said Charles, "if we can but secure my chest, we shall find in it a snug little hoard of dollars, and a few pretty valuable jewels, which I intend to dispose of as a marriage

portion for Joanna, if any body will have her," (and he glanced archly at Griffiths, whose tender solicitude about his sister had not escaped him) "and if not, I shall be entitled to a tolerable share of prize-money, for which I have fought hard, and will serve to make you and my father easy. To be sure I must stand a court-martial for the loss of his Majesty's ship, but that is only a matter of form, and I am sure that my men will bear witness I did all in my power to save her--- and a pretty creature she was: I never wish to sail in a better, but she was not lost through my fault, so I must be contented.

They smiled at his sailor-like nonchalance, and were very glad to hear his sea-chest and all its contents were safely landed.

Amongst St. Aubyn's humane cares for his own countrymen, the unfortunate prisoners thus cast on a strange shore were not forgotten. He saw that their

more immediate wants were supplied, and wrote to the proper persons in London to know what was to be their future lot, contenting himself in the meantime with having a slight guard kept over them; though of their attempting to escape in their present state, some wounded, all weak and helpless, there was not much probability.

One of the French captives turned out to be a Catholic priest, a venerable and respectable man, who had been for many years resident at Gibraltar, from whence, learning he might now with safety return to France, he had embarked in the vessel Charles Ross had captured, hoping to end his days where he had begun them, on the banks of the Garonne.

This circumstance had not been known till two days after the shipwreck, and the good Ross considering this unfortunate man as the servant of the same master, though speaking another language, and differing in many points of belief, had

invited him to share his own table; and Mrs. Ross had, like the pious Shunamite, prepared for him "a little chamber with a bed," where he might be at rest.

On the evening of that day, the weather being extremely fine, Lady St. Aubyn and Joanna expressed a wish to walk to the sea-shore to look at the wreck, and see the place where Charles and his friends had landed.

All the more painful vestiges of the shipwreck had been removed, and the bodies of the unfortunate sailors which had floated on shore had been interred in the church-yard, where Griffiths had read the funeral service.

St. Aubyn and Charles had some little business relative to the survivors to transact, but they desired Griffiths to attend the ladies, and they would shortly follow. Mrs. Bayfield also wished to see the place where the shipwreck happened, and Ellen desired her little Constantine might go also, as she thought the sea

air did him good. They set out therefore early in the evening, for the storm had cooled the air, and they wished to spend some time on the shore.

They soon reached the beach, and found the sea so calm, so beautiful, it seemed unlike the same element which had wrought such destruction the night before.

Griffiths pointed out to them the wreck, which, as it was now low water, appeared very near the shore, and shewed them the precise spot where Charles and the rest had landed.

They both shuddered and turned pale at the painful retrospection, and Joanna again expressed her thankfulness to St. Aubyn and Griffiths, whose exertions had saved them.

While they were walking up and down the beach, they met two or three of the English sailors, who were upon the look-out for any other articles the sea might have left upon the sands, and speaking

to them received their thanks and blessings for the care and kindness they had experienced.

On a large piece of timber near the edge of the water sat one of the Algerines: he looked excessively weak and sickly, and as they approached him, he surveyed them with a look of gloomy despair.

"How ill that man looks," said Ellen to one of the sailors: "he seems likely to die."

"Yes, my Lady, and die he will, for he with difficulty crawled hither, he is so ill; and the woman where he lodges says he bewails himself all night, and takes to rest.

"Poor creature!" said Ellen: "he laments, doubtless, his native land, and the friends he has left behind."

"I believe, my Lady," replied the sailor, "he laments his crimes, for one of the French prisoners that speaks a little English tells me this fellow owns he has

been a great sinner, and that he was bred a Christian, but renounced his religion and denied his God for the lucre of gain, amongst the Turks, and Mahometans, and such like."

"Horrible!" said Ellen: "are there such wretches?"

As she spoke, the poor miserable being approached her with feeble steps, and in French asked her if she would have the goodness to purchase a trinket he had to sell—all he had left of better days.

Ellen spoke French but imperfectly: she could read and understand it pretty well, but did not attempt to converse in it; she knew, however, what he said, and though her nature shuddered at a being of whom she had heard such a shocking account, endeavoured to answer him with civility: her voice, however, was low, and her accent not perfectly intelligible to the Algerine; and thinking she intended to accept his offer, he drew from his bosom a cross, composed of

large rubies set in gold, and put it into her hand: he sighed heavily; and the sight of this ornament, which seemed to corroborate the story that this man had been bred a Christian, gave to Ellen a painful sensation: she endeavoured to make him understand that his wants should be relieved without his parting from the trinket, which she offered again to him

At that moment Mrs. Bayfield, with the nurses and little Constantine, came towards them: she cast her eyes upon the Algerine—she trembled, again she looked; she caught the glance of his dark gloomy eyes, and the sound of his voice met her ears: instantly she exclaimed:

"*That* wretch!" and snatching the infant from his nurse, she folded him to her bosom and fled away, crying as she ran—"Come, my Lady, oh, come for God's sake! leave that monster: come, Miss Ross—run! fly! he will murder us all."

Wild and extraordinary as this panic

seemed to Ellen, her feet involuntarily obeyed, and with the cross still in her hand, she suddenly fled from this poor sickly wretch, who, unable to follow, stood amazed at their apparently frantic demeanour.

Joanna and Griffiths ran after the Countess; though still no one knew the cause of this extraordinary alarm; and so eagerly did the affrighted Bayfield speed, that though encumbered with the child, and advanced as she was in years, they could not easily overtake her.

While they hastened on, each unable to account for the strange terror which had seized them all, they were met by St. Aubyn and Charles Ross, who, passing Bayfield at some little distance, were unobserved by her, and seeing Ellen and Joanna apparently terrified, ran by a shorter cut to meet them.

"What on earth has happened?" said St. Aubyn, seeing them pale and almost breathless. "Ellen! Joanna! what has

happened? Has any one frightened you? Griffiths, what has alarmed them thus?"

"Indeed, my Lord," said Griffiths, "I am as ignorant as you are; the ladies were talking to the poor sick Turk on the shore, and Mrs. Bayfield on a sudden seized the child from his nurse, ran away, and called to us to follow, for we should be all murdered: Lady St. Aubyn and Joanna instantly obeyed, and I followed, but why, or what was the cause of the alarm, I am unable to imagine."

"I believe---I think," panted Ellen, "that Bayfield knew something of the man we were speaking to, for she trembled as she looked at him, and said he would murder us, or words to that effect."

"What is that in your hand, Ellen?" said St. Aubyn. "Heavenly powers! What is it?"

His limbs trembled, and he grew so pale, she thought he was fainting.

"It is a cross, my Lord," she replied, "a cross that the man---the Turk---offered to sell to me.---I forgot that I had it in my hand."

She gave it to him; he cast his eyes upon it and exclaimed:—

"That man! Where is he? Merciful heaven! Can it be!"

And suddenly recovering himself, he darted towards the place where the sick Algerine was slowly endeavouring to follow them.

"Go with him," said Ellen; "follow him, Charles; go, Mr. Griffiths: surely he cannot know this man; perhaps some mischief may ensue."

They instantly obeyed; and now Ellen and Joanna standing still and looking earnestly after St. Aubyn, saw him with the rapidity of lightning fly to the Algerine: what he said they could not hear, but with an action of the most eager impatience, they saw him with one hand tear the turban from the brow of

the Turk, and with the other seized him violently by the collar, while the poor trembling wretch sunk prostrate on the ground before him. By this time Griffiths and Charles Ross had reached them. St. Aubyn spoke, and instantly they seized the Algerine, raised, or rather dragged him from the ground, but kept him from moving, though indeed to move far was not in his power.

Ellen, unable longer to restrain her impatience to learn the meaning of this scene, now hastened towards them, though trembling so much Joanna could scarcely support her. As they approached, St. Aubyn exclaimed in a voice hoarse with contending passions :---

" Come not here, my Ellen; let not purity like thine breathe the air contaminated by that monster!

" Robber! Murderer! Vile apostate from thy God!" he cried, with gestures almost frantic, to the shaking wretch before him. " The hand of vengeance has

at length overtaken thee, and long and dreadful is the account thou now must render. Yes, look at me; I am the man you so deeply injured; I am St. Aubyn.

"Go, Ellen," again he cried, "leave us; Joanna, go with her; Griffiths, attend them; Charles and I are enough to secure this villain; besides here are sailors who will assist us."

Ellen obeyed in silence as fast as her terrors would permit, for now she no longer doubted of the cause of all this scene, which to Joanna and Griffiths appeared as if some sudden madness had seized first Bayfield and then St. Aubyn.

CHAP. IX.

Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous!
Methought the billows spake and told me of it:
The wind did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe,
——————did bass my trespass!

TEMPEST.

——————The seasons thus—
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Still find them happy, and consenting spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads.

THOMSON.

SLOWLY and with trembling steps Ellen left the beach, and went towards the village: not many yards had they proceeded ere they were met by Bayfield and two or three of the men-servants. The poor woman had at length been prevailed on to relinquish her infant charge to his nurse, who had overtaken her; and fortunately meeting the men-servants,

who, impelled by curiosity, were going to the beach to look at the wreck, she turned back with them, fearing lest any injury should befall her Lord or Lady.

"Thank God, Madam," said the good creature, who still trembled and looked pale, "that you are safe! the dear child is safe also: but where is my Lord? Oh, my dear Lord! sure he has not trusted himself with that wretch alone."

"Be calm, Bayfield, be pacified," said Ellen: "you terrify us with these emotions: your Lord is safe; Mr. Charles Ross and the sailors are with him: but who is this man you seem so much to fear? The poor creature looks not likely to injure any one, for he appears half-dead."

"Oh, my Lady, don't pity him," cried Bayfield: "but are you sure he has no pistols about him? It was a pistol you know, my Lady ———, but I forget myself: one word, Madam, if you please." She drew Ellen aside and said---"Your

Ladyship will not wonder at my alarm, when I tell you the man you were talking with was the very person my Lord has sought in vain so long; it was that wretch De Sylva! Oh, I remember the glance of his dark malicious eye:-it has never left my remembrance since the evening I by accident met him with my late Lady walking in the Cork Grove, three or four days before her death, when I did not know he was within many miles of the place; and starting at seeing them together, he gave me such a look; I never shall forget it: I thought he looked at me just the same on the beach, and I expected every moment when he would draw out a pistol and shoot some of us---perhaps the baby out of spite to my Lord, and that made me run away in that manner: oh, I was not myself, nor shall I be again this night. Oh that my Lord de Montfort was here to have all his cruel doubts put an end to for ever, for sure the villain will confess all now."

Ellen heard her with silent but tumultuous emotion, and hastened as much as possible towards the Parsonage, sending the men however to meet their lord.

The Parsonage being nearer to the beach than the Farm was, Ellen and her friends stopped there, and begged Mr. Griffiths would hasten back to St. Aubyn, and say where he would find her: she then requested Ross would go into his study with her, and there, knowing he was perfectly acquainted with the circumstances which had happened to St. Aubyn in Spain, she entreated his advice how to proceed, and that he would endeavour to calm the violent emotions which the discovery of De Sylva had excited in the bosom of St. Aubyn.

"Surely," said the pious Ross, "the hand of heaven is evident in this extraordinary event! The kind humanity which prompted Lord St. Aubyn to save the poor mariners in the storm, was not

only the means by which the life of my son was preserved, and the grey hairs of his mother and myself prevented from going down with sorrow to the grave, but has also, I hope, procured for himself the satisfaction he most earnestly wished, by bringing De Sylva once more within his reach. Wonder-working Providence! from what apparently improbable causes does thy Almighty hand bring forth the most interesting events!"

As he spoke, a bustle was heard without, and St. Aubyn rushed into the room, pale, agitated, almost breathless. Charles Ross, Griffiths, and two or three sailors, followed, leading, or rather bearing the miserable De Sylva: miserable indeed was his whole appearance: his Turkish turban had been torn from his head, and his long black hair streamed round his face in wild disorder. That face which St. Aubyn remembered a few years before glowing with animation and manly beauty, was now pale, haggard, and dis-

played marks of premature old age.—Those eyes, once so full of life and gaiety, now rolled in horrible dismay; and that form, so agile, so graceful when with the unfortunate Rosolia he led the sprightly dance, was now bowed by sickness, and shrunk by fear.—Oh, what havock does guilt make in the human face and figure! such as he stood, with looks that terrified each beholder. De Sylva was then but little more than thirty years of age, yet the vigour of his constitution, exhausted by excess, his soul a prey to every agony which racks the criminal--his course was run; the grave opened to receive him, and a few short days it was evident must terminate his life and sins together.

"Retire, my love," said St. Aubyn to his trembling wife: "this is no place for you: you know I perceive who this wretched being is: this cross, which he offered to you, was that which the ill-fated Rosolia wore the very evening she went to meet this villain in the Hermit-

age: see here my cypher upon this plate of gold, for this, with the rich necklace from which it depended, was my gift.--- Go, my love: the story which this wretched man has engaged to tell is unfitted for your tender sensibility to partake of."

Ellen instantly and gladly obeyed, and the sailors also were sent away, for the unhappy man, faint and exhausted, was too ill to make any attempt at escaping, nor could he speak till some restoratives had been administered.

During this pause, Ross suggested to St. Aubyn the propriety of having some person present to receive De Sylva's confession who was able to take it exactly as delivered, of which St. Aubyn, who alone was sufficiently master of the French language to do so, was rendered incapable by his extreme agitation; besides, it occurred to Ross, that this person should be totally unconnected with Lord St. Aubyn, that is testimony

might be totally free and uninfluenced.

St. Aubyn perfectly agreed with him, but was at a loss on whom to fix, when suddenly Ross recollected the Catholic priest, who was at that moment actually in the house, and whom St. Aubyn had never seen.

This respectable old man was accordingly summoned, and St. Aubyn in a few words explained to him the nature of the service required of him; and he readily agreed to take, and witness, the deposition of De Sylva.

He spoke in French, and with frequent breaks and interruption, which his weakness and emotion occasioned.

"I am by birth a Frenchman, but entered the Spanish service at an early age, my father being dead, and my maternal relations of that nation engaging to take care of my future promotion.

"I need not, my Lord, repeat the com-

mencement of my acquaintance with you, nor the kindness with which you received me at your villa near Seville, a reception, the hospitality of which I afterwards so ill repaid.

"The beauty of Lady St. Aubyn attracted every eye, and mine in particular, for her eye beamed kindly on me in return.

"I will not, my Lord, offend you by detailing the progress of our intimacy: you became displeased at it, and suddenly removed her to a villa near Sierra Morena. By the aid of Theresa, her favourite maid, she contrived to let me know where she was gone; and as soon as I could obtain leave of absence, I followed her."

"We met frequently in the woods about the villa, and once were met walking in the Cork Grove by your housekeeper, Mrs. Bayfield, and I had reason to believe she afterwards watched her Lady's actions.

"Lady St. Aubyn, tired of the dreary

life she led, proposed to escape with me and go to Paris: to this end she furnished me with several sums of money, and a great number of valuable jewels, amongst them a very fine ring, which, she told me, was your's, my Lord, and highly valued by you; and she owned that she had taken that ring in particular, because she knew the loss would vex you; and she hoped, as Bayfield only had access to the jewels, the loss of this valued jewel would lead you to suspect her, and bring disgrace upon the woman we both hated."

Here St. Aubyn hid his face, and groaned: he grieved to hear the woman he had once loved could have been so atrociously wicked.

"A few nights after this, my Lord," continued De Sylva, "you saw me attempting to climb by a rope ladder the window of Lady St. Aubyn's apartment: what followed is well known to you; but nothing was ever farther from my

intentions than meeting you at the place appointed; on the contrary, I informed Rosolia by means of Theresa of what had passed, and named that very hour to meet her at the Hermitage, whither I proposed to bring a boy's habit, and elope with her under that disguise; for which purpose I procured two horses, and stationed them in a thicket between the Hermitage and the Posada at the foot of the mountain, where I had resided since my arrival in that neighbourhood.

"I told you, my Lord, I had a friend there; but that was false, and I only said it to induce you to wait till the next evening, that we might have each a friend to witness our encounter.

"Rosolia watched you from the house after your return from Alhama, whence, as you came alone, we concluded you had vainly sought your friend; and, I am ashamed to say, in the few minutes we were together, how much we diverted

ourselves at the idea of your vain and fruitless trouble."

"Go on, Sir," cried St. Aubyn, fiercely—"spare this detail, and hasten to the conclusion of this detestable story."

"Rosolia then," resumed De Sylva, "told her bother she had a bad headache, and would endeavour to walk it off. From this young man she was grieved to part, and left him with emotion. She hastened to the Hermitage: we had no time to lose: she had brought with her all the valuables she could collect, and had round her neck the fine necklace of rubies you had given her at Seville, and that very cross I just now offered to those ladies on the beach.

"I pressed her to change her dress quickly, and was retiring for a few minutes, while she adjusted her male attire.

"Fearing a surprize, and thinking it might be wanted to defend us in our

flight, I had brought with me the pistol, you, my Lord, gave me the night before: this I took in my hand, lest any one should appoach to seek Lady St. Aubyn, determined if any did, to put an end to their existence; and (I will confess all) I should not have been sorry had Bayfield crossed my path.

"But as I turned to leave the Hermitage, my foot struck against an inequality in the floor, and endeavouring to recover myself, the pistol went off in my hand, and the ball entered the head of the unfortunate Rosolia.

"She fell instantly---one groan alone escaped her. I approached, hoping she was only alarmed by the report, or but slightly hurt; but to my astonishment and horror she was a breathless corpse.

"In this dreadful moment, my first idea was instant flight, since that alone could save me.---But why, thought I, since she is dead, should I leave behind

those valuable ornaments?---And O!---how hardened was my heart!

"The woman I had admired, and professed to love, had that instant breathed her last---fallen by my hand, though from an unintended stroke, and in the very moment, when, by a guilty flight, she had resolved to give me the greatest proof of love, and unite her fate with mine: yet so little impression did these dreadful circumstances make upon me, that I had sufficient composure to unclasp the costly necklace from her neck, and the bracelets from her arms, though that body, lately so blooming and so animated, was not yet cold in death.---Such is the love of the wicked!

"By some means, as I afterwards discovered, I dropt, and lost the valuable ring I mentioned before; and as I knew I had it just before I entered this fatal Hermitage, I concluded it was there I had lost it.

" I now fled as fast as possible towards the place where my horses stood, and mounting one, and leading the other, I galloped off at full speed.

" Concluding the first search for me would be amongst the mountains, I took a road immediately opposite, and reached the little town of Andurar that night: I there sold my horses, and bought a change of garments, lest those I wore should identify my person; for I concluded I should be suspected of the murder, either wilful or accidental, of the unfortunate Countess; but I was also convinced I should have two or three hours the start of my pursuers, as she was in the constant habit of rambling about at least that time, and consequently would not be missed.

" I travelled, however, chiefly by night, lurking by day either in thick woods, or the remains of Moorish castles, and only venturing near a town or village when provisions were indispensably

necessary; for now the fear of being arrested as a deserter, my leave of absence having been some time expired, made the strictest caution necessary for my security.

"In about a week I reached Almaneca, and disposing of some of my jewels, I embarked on board a vessel which was going to Venice, where I meant to remain some time, and then assuming another name, to go to Paris, where I knew my speaking French like a native would prevent me from being recognized. We had not been but three days at sea when an Algerine corsair bore down upon us, and after a short but severe conflict we were captured, and carried into Algiers.

"Here, robbed of all my ill-gained riches, except that cross, which some remains of affection for the memory of the unfortunate Rosolia had induced me to conceal so cautiously that it was not discovered, I found myself a prisoner, and

seemed doomed to end my days in slavery.

"It was my fortune to be purchased by a master high in favour with the Dey, who, pleased with my vivacity, and the skill I had in music, received me into his favour, and at length tempted me with such high offers, if I would become a Mahometan, that I, who never knew what true religion was, and held my principles too lightly to be very strenuous in their support, soon consented to be what he would have me, and solemnly abjuring the Christian faith, I became his adopted son, and heir to all his riches. By this means too I was certain of escaping any search that might be made for me; for who could think of looking for De Sylva under the turban of a Turk, and in the adopted son of the Bey Abdallah?

"About a year ago my adoptive father died; and weary of the supine and inactive life the Turks usually lead, I deter-

mined to fit out an armed vessel, and amuse myself by sailing up the Archipelago, and visiting some of the Grecian islands, not without a latent intention of quitting Algiers altogether, and returning to some European state: to which end I carried with me all the wealth I could make portable: this design I executed accordingly, but I had not long quitted Algiers, when we were attacked and captured by a French frigate.

"From that moment I have never known peace.

"Fearing to be discovered, knowing that the punishment for desertion must be mine, should we touch at any Spanish port, and I should be recognized; dreading to be accused of the murder of Lady St. Aubyn, of which, though innocent, I could not clear myself; and, above all, my conscience awakened, by being once more amongst Christians, to the sin I had been guilty of in apostatizing from my religion, I have led a life of fear, inqui-

etude, and anguish---a life which I feel will soon be terminated: and, oh, how dreadful the reflection that my punishment is but beginning.

"Oh, Sir," added the poor wretch, throwing himself at the feet of the venerable priest, who, as well as all present, had heard the detail of his crimes with horror, "you are a priest, a Catholic of that church I so wickedly abandoned. Can you give me hope? Will you pray for me?"

"I am a priest, and a Catholic," replied the old man, "and shall be willing and desirous of giving you all the consolation in my power. At present you have given the best proof of repentance, by the confession you have made, and to confirm it, you must sign it with your name, and acknowledge the truth of what I have written, before all present."

He then gave the paper to De Sylva to read, who signed it, and declared it was correct.

"I would swear it," he added, in heart-broken accents: "but oh! by what can a wretch like me swear, and be believed!"

He was now conveyed to a decent bed in Ross's house, who, like a true Christian pastor, would not abandon him to his despair; but placed by his bedside, strove in conjunction with the Catholic priest, De la Tour, by the most consoling attentions, and hopes founded on his present repentance, to beat away the busy meddling fiend, who laid strong siege unto the wretch's soul.

The miserable De Sylva lingered nearly a week, racked with guilty fears, and scarcely daring to hope for mercy: yet for mercy his pious comforters bade him hope, since he repented deeply, and sought it in that holy name, which, though once he had denied, he now most humbly acknowledged.

On the sixth evening he expired.

"Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all."

As soon as De Sylva's confession had been received, St. Aubyn sent an express messenger to the proper persons in London, requesting permission to dispatch Jean Batiste de la Tour, a French priest, into Oxfordshire, where he understood Lord de Montfort then was, at one of his seats, with papers of the utmost importance to that nobleman and to himself, De la Tour having witnessed the confession of a prisoner since dead, which involved concerns of the most material interest. He also requested permission for De la Tour to remain attached to Lord de Montfort's suite, or to be at liberty on his parole at Castle St. Aubyn, till he could obtain the consent of government to his returning to his native country; for St. Aubyn could not bear that this helpless and venerable old man should remain as a prisoner of war, and end his days in a strange country.

The answer was favourable to his Lord-

ship's wishes, and Charles Ross undertook to escort De la Tour into Oxfordshire: in the meantime a detachment arrived to guard the other prisoners to the depôt in Shropshire.

Ross and De la Tour departed together, taking with them the deposition of De Sylva, the cross of the unfortunate Rosolia, which had been found in his possession, and every other document which could carry conviction to the mind of De Montfort.

Tranquillity seemed now restored to the village of Llanwyllan, but in spite of the satisfaction St. Aubyn felt in being thus completely able to exonerate himself from whatever suspicion might yet lurk in the bosom of Edmund, his own mind was by no means tranquil.

Painful was the retrospect the confession of De Sylva had forced upon him: every misery he had so many years before experienced seemed renewed, and

his imagination dwelt upon the horrid scenes of the Hermitage. The bleeding body of Rosolia lay again in fancy before him, and his pity for her wretched fate "cut off even in the blossom of her sins," made him forget all the crimes she had been guilty of towards him.

For many days he continued exceedingly dejected, and it required all Ellen's tender attentions, and the cheering smiles of his lovely boy, to chase from his mind those painful impressions which the late discovery had planted there.

In as short a time as was possible, a messenger returned from Lord de Montfort. He acknowledged his full conviction of St. Aubyn's innocence, and implored his pardon for those years of uneasiness his suspicions had made him suffer: he expressed the greatest gratitude for the forbearing kindness of St. Aubyn's whole conduct towards his unhappy sister, of which he now had such

convincing proofs, and a horror of her guilt, which was too overwhelming to be dwelt upon. De la Tour he requested to retain in his suite till arrangements could be made for his returning to France, should the old man ultimately wish to do so.

In a short time after this letter arrived, Ellen received one from Lady Juliana, in which she expressed some dissatisfaction at their long stay in Wales, and bade them consider that at her time of life she could not hope to enjoy much more of their society, and the smiles of her darling Constantine, whose growth and improvement she longed to witness.

This letter determined Lord and Lady St. Aubyn to quit Wales as soon as possible: indeed, the autumn was now advancing, and they feared for their young traveller the miserable roads, and of course wished to be at the Castle before the summer was ended.

Lady St. Aubyn had however set her heart on being witness to Joanna's marriage, and seeing every thing arranged for the removal of the Rosses to the Farm: it was also necessary for Charles Ross to go to London on his own concerns; Joanna therefore was induced to give her hand to Griffiths sooner than she had intended, and early in August the ceremony was performed by the venerable Ross. Lord St. Aubyn gave away the bride, and when the ceremony was ended, said—

"May you, my dear Joanna, and your worthy husband, but experience as much happiness as I and my dear Ellen have since this altar witnessed our mutual vows, and you will indeed be as happy as humanity can hope to be."

Ellen tenderly embraced her early friend, and with tears of affection joined in the kind wishes of her beloved Lord.

The whole of the bride's wardrobe had

been the present of Lady St. Aubyn, who shewed her judgment, by ordering every thing excellent in its kind, but nothing fine or shewy.

Lord St. Aubyn presented the newly-married couple with several useful and handsome articles of plate and furniture; and when they left Llanwyllan, they had the happiness of knowing that the worthy Powis would be rendered truly comfortable by his new inmates, and that all Ellen's first connections were blessed to the extent of their wishes.

Charles Ross travelled part of the way with Lord and Lady St. Aubyn, full of grateful thanks for all their kindness to him and his family; and having conquered every aspiring wish, he was delighted to witness the happiness of his once-loved Ellen, without envying that of her excellent Lord.

They had soon after the pleasure of hearing that all matters relative to his

late disastrous voyage had been happily and honourably adjusted, his prize had safely reached the destined port, and through Lord St. Aubyn's interest, Charles Ross was soon promoted to the rank of Captain and the command of a fine frigate.

The St. Aubyns found Lady Juliana waiting their arrival at St. Aubyn Castle: and her intended chidings for their long stay were turned into tears of joy at the sight of her darling Constantine, now able to walk alone, and with expressive looks of love endeavouring to articulate, though yet but imperfectly, the sweet names of papa and mamma, and soon learning to distinguish Lady Juliana with smiles of affection, and little arms twined round her neck, whenever she approached him.

Just before Christmas, Sir Edward and Lady Leicester arrived at Rose-hill, where they spent some weeks. De Mont-

fort passed that evening at the Castle, with several other visitors. The once gloomy and eccentric Edmund was become another creature; and his manners, now animated and cheerful, were very elegant, and the trifling degree of singularity which still at times shewed itself in his expressions, only seemed to give an air of originality to his character.

We have now brought our narrative to a close; for scenes of continued peace and happiness, however desirable to the possessors, are but insipid in delineation.

St. Aubyn and his charming wife long enjoyed that serene happiness their virtues merited; and diversifying the scene, by occasional excursions into Wales, they had there the comfort of finding their friends surrounded by blessings, for which they were to them indebted. At the Castle, or in London, surrounded by their lovely young family, they still

acknowledged that in domestic life they found their dearest felicity; and with no more sorrow than is inseparable from humanity, their years glided on amidst the joys of friendship, and the delights of connubial and parental love.

THE END.

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